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OBSERVATIONS

UPON

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

THE SCOTCH FISHERIES, &c.

OBSERVATIONS

UPON

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

THE SCOTCH FISHERIES,

AND THE

IMPROVEMENT

OF THE

INTERIOR PARTS OF THE HIGHLANDS.

BEING

AN ESSAY ON THESE SUBJECTS,

GIVEN IN TO

THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND,

And to which they were pleased to adjudge their Highest Prize-Medal for the Year 1790.

By P. WHITE, ESQ.

OF THE GENERAL EXCISE-OFFICE, EDINBURGH.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

BY GRANT AND MOIR, PATERSON'S COURT,

Anno 1791.

PREFACE.

It has been usual for persons whom the Commonwealth of Letters did not recognize, and who have submitted their opinions to the ordeal of the Public, to introduce themselves to their Reader with an apology for their conduct. This mode of

proceeding has the reſemblance of humility and modeſty: It may be, however, doubted, (conſidering the natural pronenefs there is in mankind to ſelf-approbation,) whether in general there is much *ſincerity* in ſuch apologizing introductions. At any rate, there is certainly a degree of abſurdity, and perhaps of unfairneſs, in ſuch ſeeming lowlineſs: It is unfair, becauſe it

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is a kind of beſpeaking the Reader's favour, by practiſing upon his paſſions: And it is abſurd, becauſe the author is thereby taking blame to himſelf before any one imputes it to him. For theſe reaſons, the Author of the preſent performance has not followed the method uſually adopted in Prefaces.

It will be learned from the title page of the following ſheets, that

that they were originally wrote for the information and particular use of the Highland Society of Scotland. It is with the permission of that Society, that they now come abroad, and are submitted to the judgement of the Public.

The information upon which the arguments made use of in the present tract are founded, has

has been acquired by the experience of a ten years reſidence upon the North-Weſt coaſt of Scotland; and is likewiſe the reſult of a good deal of conſideration beſtowed upon the ſubject of the Fiſheries. Our Reader will ſee, that the inferences which we have drawn, are almoſt totally different from thoſe which have been drawn by others who have wrote before us, ſo far as

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the ſubject reſpects the Fiſheries. We however truſt, they will be found to be juſt, and to merit ſome degree of conſideration.

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The Author, in diſcuſſing his ſubject, had not any pleaſing proſpect of praiſe before him: He was obliged, conſiſtent with truth, and his own ſerious con-

viction,

viction, to repreſent a ſubject, which had become popular, in a leſs favourable point of view than it has been treated of by others.---As Praiſe was not, therefore, the Author's aim, Cenſure, he hopes, will the more readily ſpare him.

In theſe ſentiments, he ſubmits his Obſervations to the Reader.

Edinburgh,
July 18th, 1791.

OBSERVATIONS

UPON

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

THE SCOTCH FISHERIES, &c.

ADDRESSED TO

THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND.

THE SOCIETY having, in an advertiſement ſigned by their Secretary, and publiſhed in the Edinburgh Papers, deſired information from ſuch perſons as were willing to give it, as to the Preſent State of the SCOTCH FISHERY, and the beſt means of promoting and improving the ſame: And the Society having

having alſo, in their advertiſement, deſired that it might be ſtated by ſuch perſons, "What the circumſtance were "which ſhould determine the ſituation "of the villages intended to be built "upon the coaſts, and in the inland "parts of the Highlands;—the proper "meaſures to be adopted by Govern-"ment,—by the Joint-Stock Com-"pany lately eſtabliſhed by act of "Parliament,—by the Society,—or by "the proprietors of lands in the High-"lands, in forming ſuch eſtabliſhments, "—the encouragements proper to be "given,—the beſt method of provid-"ing the ſettlers with ground for "building, and other purpoſes,—and for "ſecuring to them a ſupply of neceſ-"ſaries during the infancy of ſuch "eſtabliſhment;" the preſent paper is meant

meant as an endeavour to convey to the Society the information deſired: But the author muſt crave liberty not to confine himſelf barely to the queſtions above propoſed: and likewiſe he hopes the Society will pardon him, if, in ſpeaking to theſe queſtions, he ſhall depart ſomewhat from the order in which they are ſtated. It will readily appear, to every gentleman into whoſe hands this paper may come, that in detailing facts, and making obſervations, upon a ſubject where the detailer can have no intereſt, and has no intention to miſlead, the beſt way fully to underſtand him, and to profit by his information, is to allow him to deliver the account in ſuch order as is moſt conformable to his own train of ideas. The author of the obſervations now to be offered ſhall de-

tain the Society with no farther preface or apology: If any of his remarks ſhall be deemed worthy of its attention, or ſhall be in any degree conducive to the welfare of the Fiſhery and the Country, he attains his whole aim in the preſent addreſs.

To a feeling and rational mind, the ſubject now before us will appear of the greateſt magnitude and importance, and replete with matter well worthy of the moſt ſerious inveſtigation. Whether the ſubject is conſidered as affecting individuals, or as affecting the community at large, it is equally intereſting. It concerns the well-being of nearly two-thirds of the inhabitants of this part of the United Kingdom, men who are by no means behind their neighbours

bours in either the qualities of body or mind, but whoſe labours are, at preſent, of very little uſe to the public, and of ſtill leſs to themſelves.—It was reſerved for good men, lovers of their country, to meet and conſult together, for the humane, munificent, and patriotic purpoſe, of benefiting their country, and cheriſhing her uſeful and forgotten Sons.

The order in which we propoſe to treat the matter now in hand, is, *firſt*, To give a detail of the *Preſent* State of the Scotch Fiſhery; in which we ſhall ſatisfy ourſelves with a ſhort view of that on the Eaſt Coaſt, as not being the immediate object of our enquiry, or affording ſo much field for obſervation; but ſhall dwell pretty largely upon the Fiſhery on the Weſt

Coaſt, as being the *major* point in view; in the courſe of making our obſervations upon which, we will take notice of the circumſtances which ſhould determine the ſituation of the intended villages, the encouragement proper to be given to the ſettlers, and the other requiſitions contained in the Society's advertiſement, intermingling, as we go along, ſuch remarks and ſtrictures as ſhall ariſe out of the ſubject: And to the whole we ſhall ſuperadd remarks upon the interior parts of the Highlands, with a propoſal for the improvement of that part of the country.

We might probably be excuſed, were we to omit altogether ſaying any thing of the Fiſhery upon the coaſt betwixt Berwick upon Tweed, and the entrance

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to the Murray Frith. The coaſt of that tract of country is populous and rich: there is a conſtant market for all the freſh fiſh caught there, and the inhabitants have the command of ſhipping at all times, to tranſport ſuch fiſh as they find it their account to ſend abroad or coaſtwiſe. Were the coaſts of the Highlands as populous and fertile as this part of Scotland, the taſk would be eaſy to improve the Fiſheries there: The coaſt we are ſpeaking of is the beſt improved in the kingdom: there are, however, ſome of its advantages for carrying on the Fiſhery trade which are neglected. At Stirling, Perth, Aberdeen, and Spey, the Salmon-Fiſhery is proſecuted with much attention, and a pretty good ſupply ſent from the two firſt places to the Edinburgh market.

ket; a much larger of boiled ſalmon is, however, ſent from all theſe places to the London market, preſerved in vinegar, and packed in ſmall tubs called kitts. Sometimes this fiſh has ſold in London at two ſhillings and ſixpence a pound; at other times it has been ſold as low as ſixpence. When the price falls in London, they begin at the ſalmon-rivers to ſalt their fiſh for exportation: The ordinary average price theſe fiſh bring abroad, is about four pounds *per* barrel of forty two gallons, with the further advantage of a premium from Government of ~~two~~ four ſhillings and ſixpence *per* barrel.

At Dunbar, and upon a ſmall extent of the coaſt on each ſide of the Frith of Forth, a ſhoal of herrings very often

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ſet in about the beginning of Harveſt, the greateſt part of which are ſold freſh, (moſtly at Edinburgh) and fetch great prices. The Meſſrs Falls at Dunbar followed this fiſhery with great induſtry. Some of their herrings they ſmoaked in the Yarmouth way. Theſe fiſh do not ſeem, however, to be ſo fit for curing into white or pickled herrings: they have not that ſapid oily quality which the herrings on the Weſt Coaſt lochs poſſeſs: When ſalted and kept for any length of time, they become rather inſipid and dry.

It is perhaps needleſs to mention, that within theſe few years great exertions have been made in the Whale trade; and the towns of Leith, Aberdeen, Dundee, Montroſe, &c. have made

made very encouraging adventures in that way. *Laſtly*, Although there are few herrings caught in the Frith of Forth, or upon the coaſt of the diſtrict betwixt that and the Murray Frith, yet there are a good many buſſes fitted out from that part of the coaſt, particularly from Leith, for the Herring-fiſhery on the Weſt Coaſt. About the time of Charles I. the inhabitants of the coaſts of the Frith of Forth carried on a briſk trade, and fitted out a great number of buſſes, the cargoes of which they exported moſtly to the Baltic. Some of the towns which enjoyed this trade exhibit at this day ſpectacles of miſery and wretchedneſs. The troubles which preceded and followed the King's death ruined the circumſtances, and damped the

the adventrous ſpirit of theſe merchants. But there was, and ſtill is, amongſt their ſucceſſors, a remain of that ſpirit for which their forefathers were ſo remarkable; and it is only of late years that they have totally loſt the trade of ſending herrings to the ports in the Baltic, by theſe fiſh appearing upon the coaſts of the countries there, of which the inhabitants availed themſelves.

There is no part of Scotland where the white fiſhery for the freſh markets there is carried on with more induſtry, or better underſtood, than within the diſtrict we have mentioned: We will even venture to go farther, and to affirm, that there is not in any part of Europe, (Holland excepted) better white fiſhers than thoſe who follow that profeſſion upon

upon the Eaſt Coaſt of Scotland. Is it not therefore to be wondered at, that the merchants upon that coaſt, particularly at Aberdeen, Montroſe, &c. have never made an attempt to ſend haddocks, cod, &c. to the London market? Such a trade would cerainly yield great profit: The fiſh to be ſprinkled with the pureſt of ſmall ſalt, and might be either bought from the boat-fiſhers, or caught on board the ſwift ſailing ſmacks, (in which they might be carried ſeaſonably to London) as beſt ſuited circumſtances: but the fiſhing on board the ſmacks would be the moſt certain method, becauſe they could keep the ſea to fiſh when the boats could not. It is the more ſurpriſing that this trade is not attempted, when it is conſidered, that the famous fiſhing-bank, called the

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Long Forties, runs alongſt this part of the coaſt. We do not know that the inhabitants of the eaſt coaſt of Scotland neglect any other local advantage they poſſeſs from their ſhores, excepting that we have now mentioned, unleſs, perhaps, that they do not pay that attention to their lobſter-fiſhing which it deſerves.

We ſhall now ſpeak of the fiſhery on the coaſt of that track of country, which lies between the entrance to the Murray Frith, and the promontory called Cape Wrath, in the county of Sutherland; in which we ſhall include the Orkney Iſlands. We ſhall omit ſaying any thing of the Shetland fiſhing, as probably not being particularly embraced by the Society, whoſe pa-

tronage, if we apprehend right, has the Highlands and Iſlands adjacent thereto, for its more immediate objects. Indeed, it is ſo far convenient to our purpoſe, that little remains to be propoſed, for improving the fiſhery carried on upon the coaſt of Shetland: the induſtry of the inhabitants is great, and their ſucceſs not diſproportioned to it. We hope the day is at no great diſtance, when we ſhall ſee the like attention to the curing of good and merchantable fiſh among the natives of the Highland coaſt, as is amongſt the inhabitants of Shetland, and their induſtry equally rewarded. Much praiſe is due to the gentlemen in Shetland; they are the very ſoul of the fiſhing there; it was firſt foſtered by them, and they maintain it to this day, to the great advantage

vantage of themſelves, and the natives their dependents, who are amongſt the beſt *curers* of cod, ling, and other white fiſh in Scotland. The cod-fiſhing is more certain at Shetland than the herring, and the inhabitants of courſe turn their attention moſtly to the former. At ſame time, ſuch herrings as they do cure are the beſt of this country. This is an effect of their frequent communication with the Dutch.

The only fiſhing carried on in the Murray Frith, excepting the white fiſhing for the freſh markets at the towns of Cromarty, Elgin, Forres, Nairn, and Inverneſs, is the ſalmon-fiſhery at the rivers of Neſs and Beaulie, and a leſſer ſalmon-fiſhing at the river of Findhorn. There is indeed a

ſmall ſhoal of herrings uſually appear (at leaſt once a year) in the Frith; and for ſome years back have conſtantly appeared at a narrow ſtrait, which divides Inverneſs-ſhire from Roſs-ſhire, called the Ferry of Keſſock. Theſe fiſh are, however, of ſo ſmall a ſize, and ſo poor, as to be altogether unfit for curing; they are therefore ſold moſtly at the market at Inverneſs, and are, in ſome ſcarce ſeaſons, a welcome ſupply to the inhabitants of that country. The continuance of theſe fiſh is very uncertain; ſometimes only a few days, at other times for a month; but they never appear in any conſiderable quantities.—The Society will perceive that this account of the Keſſock herrings is very different from that given by a late writer of a neighbouring kingdom.

dom. He ſeems throughout to have viewed every thing in this country through a favourable glaſs. But the account here given is the truth, which, though not always ſo pleaſant as fiction, is yet in the end more wholeſome. But we return from this digreſſion to our ſubject, and have to obſerve, that the fiſhing for ſalmon in the rivers above mentioned, is puſhed with great induſtry; and the tackſmen of theſe rivers, who are ſometimes alſo tackſmen of part of the ſalmon rivers in Angus, Aberdeen and Banff-ſhires, follow the ſame plan of boiling for the London market, or ſalting for exportation, at Inverneſs and Beaulie, as is done at the other rivers in Scotland.—It appears by the cuſtom-houſe books at Inverneſs, that about the 1743, ten thouſand bar-

rels of herrings were caught and cured in the Murray Frith, near the place where Fort George now ſtands: Since that time there has been no conſiderable take of herrings, fit for curing, in that Frith.

Within the Frith of Dornoch, and upon the whole of the eaſt coaſt of Sutherland, there is not any fiſhing carried on that deſerves almoſt to be mentioned. We know of no ſalmon river of any note within that diſtrict: An inconſiderable ſalmon-fiſhing is carried on at the Bonar, at the head of the ſaid Frith; another one at Brora, and one at Helmſdale. Herrings have not appeared upon the eaſt coaſt of Sutherland, in any great number, for a long time back: Indeed, ſhould they appear,

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the natives are not poſſeſſed of tackling to kill them. This part of the coaſt abounds, however, in excellent white fiſh, particularly off Tarbett-neſs, and in a line from the ſouth ſide of the Murray Frith to the north ſide of the Frith of Dornoch, and down towards the coaſt of Caithneſs. A good ſupply is afforded for the uſe of the country thereabouts. Much profit would ariſe to perſons who would employ ſmall veſſels in fiſhing on that part of the coaſt for the London market; the fiſh to be ſprinkled in the way we have already mentioned. This is the only improvement the fiſhery will admit of upon this part of the coaſt; but the attainment of it would be of great conſequence to the country.

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The north-eaſt coaſt of Caithneſs is not remarkable for a reſort of herrings. White fiſh are plenty enough in common with the reſt of the eaſt coaſt of Scotland. Before we ſpeak of the north-weſt coaſt of Caithneſs, which lies within the Pentland Frith, we ſhall juſt mention the Orkney Iſlands; and, with regard to them, we have only to obſerve, that herrings do not uſually embay themſelves amongſt theſe iſlands, at leaſt not in any conſiderable numbers; they have white fiſh enow there, and they have a very clear navigation for carrying them to London, if they inclined ſo to do. It would be no objection to the ſale of theſe fiſh that they were powdered with ſalt; on the contrary, ſuch fiſh are very agreeable when boiled, to the taſte of moſt people.

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Upon the north-weſt coaſt of Caithneſs, there is uſually a good fiſhing for herrings: They appear there ordinarily in ſummer. At Wick and Staxigo, ſome buildings have been erected for curing red herrings, by merchants from Dunbar and Aberdeen. We do not know, however, that they have had much ſucceſs. The coaſt there is ſo dangerous, and the weather, even in ſummer, ſo boiſterous, that it is not ſafe to fiſh in either boats or veſſels upon that coaſt, eſpecially as there is not a proper harbour upon the whole of it. It is certainly a great object, to the gentlemen of the county of Caithneſs, to attempt to get at leaſt one good landing place made upon that coaſt, which would greatly facilitate the fiſhing there, which, in our opinion, will never

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do much good until that happens. It is the more to be regreted that there is not harbours upon that coaſt, that the Caithneſs herrings are a good deal larger than any got upon the reſt of the whole coaſt of Scotland.

We are now arrived upon the weſt coaſt of Scotland, which may very properly be denominated the Great Fiſhing Grounds of Britain. This appellation belongs to the ſhores of the whole track of country, which lies between the north-weſtern extremity of the coaſt of Caithneſs, and the Mull of Galloway, including alſo under that name the whole of the Hebrides. It is no part of our purpoſe in this paper to enter into geographical or hiſtorical accounts of theſe coaſts and iſlands, as being

ing a thing extraneous to the ſubject. Were it indeed allowable to introduce ſuch deſcriptions here, they are already anticipated, in the large accounts publiſhed in the works of Pennant, Johnſton, Anderſon, Knox, &c. In ſhort, ſo much has of late been wrote and ſaid (ſome true, ſome falſe) about the Hebrides, that it would be almoſt an impertinent taſk, to attempt a farther deſcription of them. The geography of theſe remote countries and iſlands is now more familiar to ſome perſons even in England, than that of the county of Middleſex.

We ſhall here, by the way, take the liberty to obſerve, that it is a pity that little benefit has accrued to the fiſhery or the country, from the (probably) well-

well-meant endeavours of ſome of the writers above mentioned. There were two great reaſons for their failure in this reſpect: The firſt was, that the accounts they publiſhed were picked up by them in the courſe of their flying excurſions, when they neither had time nor opportunity to ſtudy the genius and diſpoſition of the natives of that country, to conſider its trade, or to weigh its local advantages or diſadvantages. Founded upon information thus obtained, voluminous productions have been obtruded upon the world full of inferences, as falſe as the propoſitions they flowed from, and containing extravagant expreſſions and contradictions. This laſt is the other cauſe of theſe writings not being attended to by the great in the other kingdom, and, of

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courſe the ſubject of them not being taken up as a national concern. Knox ſays, in his View of the Britiſh Empire, Vol. 1ſt. page 121ſt, "The tenants are "oppreſſed by the proprietors of lands "in the Highlands."—Again, page 123d of ſame volume, "That the proprietors "of lands in the Highlands are Gamblers and Horſe-Jockies," and, page 127th, ſame volume, "That Highland "eſtates are the ſeats of oppreſſion, "anguiſh and wild deſpair."

We ſhall ſuppoſe an Engliſh gentleman, a Member of Parliament, ſitting in his cloſet, with Mr Knox's book in his hand: when he comes to the paſſages cited, he lays down the book for a moment: his meditation will be very ſhort; and its odds but it produces the following ſoli-

loquy: "If what is here ſaid be true, (and from the confident manner in which it is aſſerted, I would incline to believe it is true) I think I perceive this buſineſs to be a bite. If Parliament ſhall proceed to give away the public money to encourage thoſe oppreſſed men to fiſh, why, what benefit to them ſhall it be? it will only increaſe the rapacious demands of theſe gamblers and horſe-jockies upon them." The Engliſh member muſes a little, perhaps, and begins to get rid of this difficulty, by reflecting, that, in good policy, a partial evil may be permitted, when it draws along with it a general good. That is to ſay, no matter, whether the *actual* catchers of the fiſh are benefited or not: If *they* are encouraged, fiſh will be caught; and of courſe the trade

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and proſperity of the country promoted. The gentleman, thus again reconciled to the ſubject, takes up the book, and reads on, perhaps, till he comes to page 377. of it, where the author ſays, "That "the *want of ſale* was one of the prin- "cipal cauſes of the failure of the "Britiſh White Herring Company, eſ- "tabliſhed in 1750, by men of unlimit- "ed property, aided by a bounty of "50 s. *per* ton from Government, "without the rivalſhip of Ireland." The Member is ſtartled, and a ſecond time lays down the book: He immediately ſays to himſelf, "I have now read 377 pages of this author; and I have been all along underſtanding his drift to be, to ſtimulate a ſpirit of adventure in the Fiſhery.—I did not well underſtand him, I confeſs, when he enabled

me, by his ſtatement about the oppreſſions of Highland proprietors, to draw a concluſion unfavourable to his own deſign. I thought indeed I had relieved myſelf from that difficulty; but he has ſnatched the hope, by raiſing an inſuperable objection; for he tells me, unequivocally, that there was not a market for Britiſh herrings, even when Ireland caught none. I know that now prodigious quantities of herrings are caught by the Iriſh; I know, likewiſe, that ſince the 1750, we have acquired no new colonies to which we may export our herrings; nor have we, by any new and ſuperior modes of curing them, procured to ourſelves a preference in the European markets. I perceive the whole buſineſs to be a miſtake. If we have not a proper market

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for even the Herrings we now catch, why give money to encourage the catching more, until new markets are diſcovered? That would be needleſs, indeed: I will read no more: This author either does not underſtand his ſubject, or is endeavouring to impoſe upon his reader." With this, the well meaning gentleman, who probably would have given his ſupport in the Senate, to any proper plan for encouraging the Highland Fiſheries, throws down Mr Knox's book, never more to take it up, or to ſpeak favourably of the ſubject of it.

Inconſiſtencies and miſ-ſtatements could likewiſe be pointed out, in the writings of the other gentlemen who have viſited that country, but it would anſwer

no particular purpoſe to do ſo here.—Mr Knox having, however, exceeded them all, in the heedleſs and ranting manner of his detail, we thought it not improper to ſtep aſide a little from our ſubject to mention him. We are much afraid he has done hurt to that, which (we have the charity to believe) he meant to ſerve. At the ſame time, it may not be improper to obſerve, as a neceſſary caution in reading his performances, that Mr Knox was originally a bookſeller in London, in which profeſſion he was very ſucceſsful.—After having realiſed 10,000 l. he quitted *Bookſelling*, and commenced *Bookmaking*. Mr Knox knew from experience, that the ſale of a book did not ſo much depend upon its containing truth, as upon its being judiciouſly decorated

with matter which would excite curioſity. It is to be feared that his anxiety for the ſale of his book has kept pace with, if not exceeded, his anxiety for the Fiſhery, although the latter was his great cry. Nothing can ſhew this more, than the wanton manner in which he attacks the characters of individuals.—Knox knew, as a bookſeller, that ſcandal is always read; and that plain truth is too uniform, to pleaſe the taſte of an age ſo remarkable for the purſuit of variety.

Having taken the liberty to make this digreſſion, we proceed again to take notice, that the whole Weſt coaſt of Scotland abounds with fiſh of different kinds, and, in the proper ſeaſon, with innumerable quantities of herrings.—

rings.—As the herrings are more eaſily catched than any other kind of Fiſh, are fitter for receiving ſalt ſo as to keep, and are to be found in greater numbers than any other kind of fiſh; of courſe, from the very earlieſt accounts of civilization in this country, the catching theſe fiſh has drawn attention from the inhabitants of the country; not only from thoſe reſident upon the coaſts where they are caught, but from thoſe upon the Eaſt coaſt of the kingdom, who have ſailed thither to take them, from very early periods of the Scottiſh hiſtory. It is apprehended that it would be a needleſs taſk to deſcribe minutely, here, the method of catching the herrings. It is generally known, that it is in the night time they are eaſieſt killed, by means of very long nets, reaching

almoſt

almoſt to the bottom of the water: When theſe nets are drawn up, the herrings are ordinarly found ſtrangled in the maſhes or loops of them: When thus found, they preſent perhaps the moſt beautiful appearance in all animated nature, being enamelled, gilded, painted, infinitely beyond every thing which the moſt glowing colours, and happy pencil can deſcribe: Thus ſecured, they are deprived of their guts: the melt and roan are however allowed to remain: Then they are ſalted and barrelled up; and, when ſo cured, with cleanlineſs and care, are an acceptable boon from the all-gracious Author of Nature.—Unhappily, however, in this country, we have not yet learned, or are unwilling to learn, how to preſerve, to the greateſt advantage, this gift of the Creator.

There

There is as much difference to the palate, in eating a herring taken out of a barrell at Amſterdam, and one taken out of a barrell at Greenock, as is between the reliſh of a piece of pork, part of a ſwine fed at a meal-mill in Aberdeenſhire, and a piece of the like creature, fed amongſt the ſea wreck and ſhell-fiſh, on the coaſt of Ireland. On the cauſe of this difference, we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak hereafter.

We now proceed to ſtate to the Society, in a brief manner, the preſent poſture of the Fiſhery for herrings upon the coaſts of the Weſt-Highlands; but, in doing this, it will perhaps be better to go a little back. It is with very great pleaſure that we begin by acquainting the Society, that from good

good information, it appears, that the inhabitants of ~~to~~ the town of Stornaway in the Iſland of Lewis (a property of the Seaforth family,) have, with great induſtry and perſeverance, followed the fiſhing ever ſince the union of the two kingdoms, and with exemplary ſucceſs. Their anceſtors followed this buſineſs from very early times, of which there are ſufficient monuments remaining: but it was after the Union that the merchants in Stornaway had full ſcope for their laudable purſuits: then it was, that the herrings which they caught, might lawfully be ſent to the Britiſh Weſt-India Iſlands, and be exported thither, and to all other lawful places, attended with the encouragement of a bounty: from that time, the people of Stornawayhave been gradually

gradually advancing. Some twenty-five or thirty years ago, all the fish they caught were carried for them to their port of destination by hired vessels. Now they can shew in their harbour, in the fishing time, upwards of thirty sail of stout handsome vessels, from twenty to seventy tons burden, all their own property. Their town is a pattern of neatness and cleanliness; and when a stranger enters their convenient mansions, he will have set before him a piece of well-dressed Highland mutton, some choice fish, and a bottle of port, the produce of the hospitable landlord's industry. To the everlasting credit of these industrious fishers and merchants, it falls to be recorded, that they have made their pleasant hamlet rise into view, and display

upwards

upwards of an hundred ſlated houſes, beſides inferior ones, from their gain from the ſea. Thus Stornoway flouriſhed, though it even laboured once under ſome diſadvantages, the particulars of which, as they would bring the names of individuals above board, we chooſe to avoid. But the caſe is widely different now; Stornoway has for its Lord, ſuch a one as it long has wiſhed for and deſerved; even the noble gentleman who loves his country and his friends. The firſt thing, in our opinion, which will interrupt the proſperity of this riſing ſettlement, will be the overdoing of the Herring Fiſhery upon the coaſts of Britain, of which there is great danger. Of this we will have occaſion to ſpeak more largely hereafter.

Thus Stornoway ſtood alone for a long period, as the only fiſhing ſtation upon that part of the coaſt: But in the year 1776, certain merchants from Liverpool and the Iſle of Man, began to erect houſes at Iſle Martin in Lochbroom, in the county of Roſs, and at Loch-Inver in the county of Sutherland, for curing herrings after the Yarmouth way; that is, ſmoaking them into red herrings: At ſame time, a cuſtomhouſe with proper officers, was eſtabliſhed at Ullapool, two miles from the firſt mentioned place. Five or ſix years afterwards, ſome merchants at Inverneſs erected houſes for the like purpoſe at Gairloch in Roſs-ſhire, and alſo ſhades, and other convenient houſes for curing cod, which are caught in great numbers upon a bank which be-

begins at the mouth of that loch: and five years ago, a merchant at Stornoway, with ſome partners in London, erected conſiderable buildings upon the Iſland Taurera, a ſmall holm upon the coaſt of the Cromarty eſtate in Weſter Roſs, about eight miles from the new village of Ullapool. Mr Rodrick Moriſon, the acting partner of this company, has great merit, for having planned and conducted this undertaking, which bids fair to be a thriving fiſhing ſtation, being in the centre of the beſt of the Lochbroom fiſhing grounds. Indeed this piece of ſervice done to that country, is the leaſt part of Mr Moriſon's merit: the public are indebted to him for his general zeal and induſtry, which holds forth an excellent example to the inhabitants of that part of

the coaſt; and as he carries on different branches of trade, he has introduced into that neighbourhood a ſpirit for dealing, and has given them, by his example, a pattern of punctuality in making payments. The good conduct of a man of note, is of vaſt conſequence in the Highlands. This is well known to every one who is acquainted with that country.

It would be of little ſervice to the views of the Society, for the author of this paper to deſcribe to them all the different leſſer fiſhing ſtations upon the Weſt coaſt, with which he is acquainted: there are numbers of ſhades for curing fiſh, and ſmall ſtore-houſes for ſalt, caſks, &c. all along the coaſt, and in the iſlands of the Weſt of Scotland; particularly at Loch-

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Torridon, a little to the ſouthward of Gairloch. In the iſland of Lewis, many of the farmers in the remote parts of it fiſh for cod &c. which they ſell to the Stornoway merchants; theſe have convenient houſes erected upon their reſpective farms for facilitating the trade.

The moſt conſiderable fiſhing upon all the coaſts of Britain, for cod and ling, is in the neighbourhood of theſe iſlands, viz. upon that ground called the Mother Bank. This bank runs between the Iſland of Mull on the eaſt, and Barra and South Uiſt on the weſt. The beſt fiſhing is off Barra-head, whether a number of veſſels reſort every ſeaſon. The merchants at Peterhead, and ſome people at Aberdeen, have

made conſiderable profit of this fiſhing. The people in Campbeltown and Rothſay, and in the Clyde, rather prefer fiſhing for herrings than for cod &c; whereas on the Eaſt coaſt they prefer the white fiſhing. The reaſons for the conduct of each are plain, viz. in the Clyde and other places in the weſt, the demand for herrings, owing to their Weſt India trade, is briſker than for white fiſh; while, upon the Eaſt coaſt, where there is no American trade, it is *vice verſa*. The ſalmon fiſhing upon the Weſt coaſt is of no great conſequence: this is owing to the ſhort run of their rivers. There may be ſome of that fiſh caught in the river Nith, and in the Solway, and at Air; but they are no conſiderable object.

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The moſt of the herring fiſhing trade of Scotland, is carried on by means of veſſels called buſſes, fitted out from Campbeltown, Rothſay, Greenock, Port-Glaſgow, and other places in the river Clyde and its vicinity. There has been conſiderable profit derived to theſe towns from this trade, which is encouraged by a bounty from Government, of thirty ſhillings *per* ton meaſurement of the veſſels.—A further aid is granted by the public, in a premium of 2 s. 8 d. for each barrel of white herrings exported to foreign parts, and other premiums upon different kinds of fiſh, which it would be needleſs here to enumerate.

At the cloſe of the American war, the trade of fiſhing upon the Weſt coaſt ſtood

ſtood much in the way we have deſcribed it. The troubles of the then preceding times, had damped the trade of the Weſtern fiſhing towns; and at the end of the ſaid war, this country altogether could reckon but few buſſes upon the fiſhing. Since that time, the number of buſſes are almoſt doubled. This was partly an effect of the peace, and partly owing to the laudable endeavours of certain patriotic individuals, who, by their talents and influence, called forth public attention to the Fiſhery: Hence a meaſure aroſe, which throws a luſtre upon the annals of the preſent day: This was the eſtabliſhment and incorporation of the Joint-ſtock Company, for the ſpecial purpoſe of extending, protecting, and encouraging the Fiſhery—and the incorporation

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of the Society, to which the preſent paper is addreſſed. By the exertions of the members of thoſe aſſociations, both in their individual and collective capacities, certain laws, which were juſtly deemed impolitic, as tending to cramp the Fiſhery, (though meant at firſt to ſecure the revenue), were abrogated and annulled, and ſome very liberal indulgences were granted by Parliament to the trade, which have been productive of good conſequences. What theſe were, it is needleſs here to recapitulate; it is preſumed they are known to every member of the Society, and therefore, we ſhall not here enter upon them. We ſhall likewiſe refrain from entering into a minute deſcription of what has been done by the Joint-ſtock Company, at their villages of Toppermorry and Ullapool,

Ullapool, as things already known to the Society, and therefore needleſs to trouble it with.

Under the apprehenſion, that the intentions of the Society in requiring information regarding the Fiſhery, would be better anſwered by making remarks upon the moſt important parts of it, and pointing out improvements, than by long and minute details of its preſent ſituation, we have abridged our accounts of it as much as we could, conſiſtent with our ſaid purpoſe; and we now proceed to cloſe this part of our deſign, by taking notice of the preſent ſtate of the Fiſhery in general.

The fiſhery of moſt importance to Scotland is undoubtedly the herring. We have

have aſſigned our reaſons for this uncontroverted opinion, upon the 43d and 44th pages of this paper. If ever there was a game of chance in the world, it is in fiſhing for herrings. To-day they are to be found in ſwarms baffling the power of numbers to reckon, or almoſt the mind to conceive: to-morrow they are gone, and their place knows them no more. How idle then is the doctrine of ſome, who have lately had the hardineſs to advance in their publications this poſition, viz. "*That that trade which can-*
"*not be carried on without the aid of*
"*a Government, ought to be abandoned.*"
Some who have brought forth theſe doctrines think themſelves philoſophers. It may be ſo: But the world now-a-days has more wit, than to allow cloſet ſpeculatiſts to ſyſtemize for it, in mat-

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ters of trade. Has it been out of any treatiſe on trade by any philoſopher or philoſophers, that ſucceſsful merchants have learned their leſſons? or will any miniſter of ſtate ever be mad enough to adopt the maxims of ſuch ſophiſts? We have happily no uſe for their philoſophy in this queſtion: it is ſo plain that the ſimpleſt man underſtands it. There cannot be a doubt, that if there was not an aid from Government, two thirds at leaſt of thoſe perſons who fit out herring buſſes, would drop the trade. If this ſuppoſition is granted, (and there is the beſt reaſon to think it will,) it follows, that by the plan of the philoſophers, this country (the independence of which, is ſo nearly allied to the reſpectable ſtate of its navy), would for the ſake of ſaving a paltry ſum, forgoe

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the advantages ariſing from the ſupply of ſeamen, which the fiſhery nurſes up, and the advantages which the Community at large derive from the fiſhery, as at preſent carried on. It is to be hoped the wiſdom of the Government of this country, will avoid the adoption of ſuch a pernicious meaſure. The loſs which would thereby ariſe to the country, whether conſidered in a political, or commercial view, is ſo plain, that it requires no philoſophy, but only a little common underſtanding, to pronounce the poſition advanced by theſe grave ſages, to be ſo abſurd, as not to deſerve a ſerious refutation.

We have ſaid, that the fiſhing-trade is precarious: Our obſervation is verified, in the indifferent ſucceſs of it for

ſome years back. There is no body however can doubt, but the bounty paid for encouraging the herring-fiſhery in veſſels, is well compenſated to the country, by the ſtrength derived to our navy, from the ſervices of the ſeamen nurſed up in the ſaid trade, although a ſingle herring was never to be catched by them.

There has not been any great fluctuation in the price of herrings, for the laſt ſeven years. Upon an average, white-herrings may have ſold for 24 s. *per* barrel, and red for 30 s. The quantity of white-fiſh taken for the laſt ſeven years, has been much the ſame as for the ſeven years preceding. And the average price of mud-fiſh, (or barrelled ſalted cod,) in London, has been,

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in that period, about a guinea and a half *per* barrel. The quantity of dry-fiſh exported from this country is not very conſiderable: They may have fetched, upon an average for the laſt ſeven years, 20 s. *per* cwt.

We have now finiſhed all we mean to ſay, in this ſtage of our deſign, by way of detailing the preſent ſtate of the Scotch Fiſhery: What will hereafter follow, ſhall principally contain our opinion and obſervations upon the ſubject.

In reflecting deliberately upon this buſineſs, it will be found to be involved in much more difficulty, than at firſt would be apprehended: The reſult of a careful conſideration of the ſubject,

is not ſo flattering as we would wiſh. Truth ought, however, to be ſuperior to every conſideration; and we are impelled by it to acknowledge, that after weighing all arguments, *pro* and *con*, the following uncomfortable paradox ariſes, viz. *Much* farther encouragement given to the herring-fiſhery, will not *at preſent* benefit that fiſhery; and, if the encouragements are carried *a great deal* farther, they will utterly ruin the trade. But the ſame reſearch into the ſubject, which preſents this gloomy picture, affords us, in return, the following pleaſing propoſition, viz. The encouraging the fiſheries, *though even carried too far*, will moſt certainly benefit the Highlands and its coaſts. The latter is a very clear poſition, and is ſatisfactory ſo far.

Certainly

Certainly it was the belief of thoſe gentlemen, who compoſe the Honourable Societies which have taken ſo laudable a concern in the matter now before us, that, while they benefited the Highland-coaſt, they at the ſame time advanced the fiſheries; and their inſtitution, purpoſe, and intention, was to embrace both objects, which were judged to be reciprocal: But upon a narrow examination of the buſineſs, we are humbly of opinion, that theſe two intereſts are *at preſent* almoſt ſeparate, and that it will require a ſteady hand to prevent the former from encroaching upon the latter; an event, the evil conſequences of which the Highlands itſelf would ſhare in at laſt; this, too, may ſeem paradoxical.

To come to the point, then, we ſhall firſt obſerve, that it is perfectly well

known, that the profits ariſing from the trade of catching and barreling, what is called pickled herrings, are not very great, even although the buſineſs is at preſent upheld by an aid from Government, which is a natural conſequence of the very limited ſale for theſe fiſh; excepting at home, and in our own Weſt-India iſlands, we have *no market for them.* The merchants upon the continent of Europe will not look at them, if there is a Dutch herring in the market; and when there is no Dutch competitors, the Danes, Swedes, and other Northern fiſhers, are always at hand, ready, infinitely to underſell us. Even the Iriſh, when their own herring-fiſhing fails, do not apply to us, but to the Danes, &c. who ſerve them cheaper. The only Britiſh herrings which can ſhew their face in the

the European markets, (and even theſe only within the Mediterranean, for the Dutch and our other neighbours have plenty of them,) is that manufacture of them called red herrings. Before however theſe can be cured, conſiderable and expenſive buildings muſt be erected, which is very unſuitable to the circumſtances of the greateſt part of thoſe people, who carry on the Scotch Herring Fiſhery.

This account it is impoſſible to controvert; and the reflection which naturally follows it is, that by too fondly giving way to the heedleſs clamour, and ill-grounded expectations, which the Fiſheries, as a popular ſubject, have given riſe to, and exceſſively encouraging the trade in queſtion, the mark

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may be over-ſhot, and the child only meant to be fondled, may be cruſhed to death in the over eager embrace.

It is a truth, and it demands the moſt ſerious conſideration, that there is not a market for even the fiſh that are caught in ſome years under the preſent encouragements: even the Dutch themſelves, ſuperior as their herrings are, find difficulty enough in diſpoſing of them; it is an undeniable fact, that their herring trade is much upon the decline. All Northern Europe is now engaged in the herring Fiſhery: hence the market is glutted, and the profits gone to almoſt nothing.

Let it be aſked at a buſs-fiſher, and he will frankly tell you, that in a bad fiſh-

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ing year, when he has made only half a cargo, he cleared more money by the adventure, than when the herrings were plenty, and a full cargo has been made by him. Thus, the trade may, and is in danger of being over-done. It would be well if ſuch meaſures were taken, as to make the intereſts of the Highlands and the Fiſheries reciprocal; and this we think could be fully effected, by a wiſe and moderate protection and encouragement, given to both. It is very allowable to ſuppoſe, that, allured by an exceſſive encouragement, ſuch numbers will attempt the fiſhing trade, that the profits, if any, will be too inconſiderable to induce any perſon to follow it; of courſe the trade will be loſt to the country. In this caſe, although the Highlands behoved, for ever after,

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to feel the good effects of what has already been done there by the Joint-ſtock Company, in collecting the people together in towns, yet the falling off of the Fiſhery, would be a mortal wound to the proſperity of theſe young ſettlements, in a country where there is no great ſcope to puſh agriculture, and where they muſt expect to improve their capitals, rather out of the ſea than out of the land. How happy would it be, were things carried to the point of propriety and no farther; then would both the Highland villages and the Fiſhery, live and grow up together, to the immortal honour of thoſe good patriots, whoſe virtue firſt led them to turn their attention to their forgotten fellow-men, in thoſe remote and uncomfortable regions. But even the diſaſtrous event we have been

been ſuppoſing, ſhould it ever happen, would not *totally* root up the good effects of the meaſures already taken for improving the Highland coaſts: individuals might loſe by the failure of the Fiſhing, but the Community at large would derive the greateſt benefit from the civilization of that country, which, whether the Fiſheries ſucceed or not, will in all probability be the conſequence of the experiments now making, of collecting the people there together in towns.

In all the publications which have been of late ſported upon the ſubject of the Fiſhery, the great cry has been—*Get fiſh at any expence.—The country will never be right till its Aquatic treaſures are produced.—Puſh the Fiſhery to*

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its utmoſt extent: it is a mine of national wealth &c. One of theſe writers, (Mr Knox, as we have already ſtated), awkwardly and inconſiſtently, (though very truly) blunders out the important fact, that the want of market for our fiſh is ſadly to be apprehended. *There is the rub.* If this is true, all the enthuſiaſm which has been diſplayed about puſhing the fiſhery goes for nothing, and only ſhows, that thoſe Gentlemen, who have wrote ſo much upon it, would have done better, had they reflected more, and wrote leſs. Luckily for the country, every body was not ſo ſanguine as theſe gentlemen were, or at leaſt pretended to be. The Fiſheries are no doubt a moſt important object to this country, and every *proper* indulgence and encouragement ought to be given

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to the proſecuting them; but every judicious perſon will at once ſee, from the hints we have given, that caution is as much neceſſary, in fixing the bounds of that encouragement, as in adminiſtring a medicine, of which a certain quantity would preſerve the patient's life, but more than that might kill him.

In this place, it may not be improper, in defence of the concluſions we have been drawing, to introduce certain additional premiſes, which we imagine will not be controverted. They are theſe: The Americans have plenty of herrings upon their coaſts: they can ſail freely to any part of Europe for ſalt; and their country abounds with wood fit for curing *red herrings*. Thus provided, it may be ſoon looked for,

that they will attempt to ſupply Europe with fiſh, and ruin *our* market for the above mentioned herrings in the Italian countries.

Thus we are of opinion, (contrary to the current of popular buzz) that it is poſſible to do *too much* towards encouraging the Fiſheries. But we beg to be underſtood, that it is by no means inſinuated that the ſteps already taken for that purpoſe, are all that the trade demands, and that the country ſhould there ſtop. At ſame time, we freely own our opinion, that there is not a great deal to do, of all that is neceſſary, or even ſafe, in the preſent ſtate of the trade, towards encouraging the Fiſheries.

Having ſaid thus much, it behoves us

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to ſubmit to the Society *our* opinion, as to the kind of encouragements proper to be given to the trade, and the extent of thoſe encouragements.

In the hiſtorical accounts of population and trade, we find that mankind, (not only individuals but nations) have ordinarily been benefited by the examples of each other.—Venice aimed to be what Carthage once was: and the ſeven United Provinces made Venice, as much as they could, their model, not in Government only, but in trade and manufactures, and in maxims in trade. No one can doubt, that the Dutch are at this day better acquainted with the methods of curing fiſh, eſpecially herrings with ſalt, than any other people in the world: we

have ſtated that the Britiſh herrings have a confined ſale; the *firſt* reaſon for this, is, that the Dutch herrings are always preferred to ours at market, for their goodneſs; and the *ſecond*, that the herrings of other foreigners get preference for their cheapneſs. The endeavouring to do away the firſt mentioned evil, (which will virtually relieve us alſo of the ſecond) is therefore, in our opinion, a firſt ſtep in the improvement of our Fiſheries; for, as has been ſaid, to what purpoſe do we catch fiſh, if we cannot vend them? although our fiſh curers were able to ſend ſuch herrings to market as the Dutch do, there would ſtill be occaſion for the caution we have recommended in encouraging the Fiſheries; for even in that caſe, the Dutch would ſtill get preference by under-

underſelling us. This they are enabled to do, from their national genius for parſimony and ſobriety. Thus, the Dutch will always have the upper-hand of us in the herring trade. The only mark therefore left for *us*, is to endeavour to beat the Danes, Swedes, &c. out of the market (as the Dutch at preſent do both us and them) by bringing better (for we cannot bring cheaper) commodities there. If our fiſh-curers wiſh to fiſh, it would be wiſdom in them to endeavour to learn to cure their fiſh; ſeeing their doing ſo, is the *only* chance they have to ſell them to ſtrangers, or to induce our Weſt India planters to enlarge their orders for herrings. Were the Britiſh as good as the Dutch herrings, the ſugar planters would order double the quantity they do: not

only the negroes, but the white people in the Weſt Indies, would think them good food.

The Society will probably be ſurpriſed to be informed, that the ſuperiority which the Dutch have over us in the fiſh trade, is owing, in great part, to the cleanlineſs and care with which they pack their fiſh, and the want of theſe requiſites in our fiſh-curers. To be brief, the whole matter is this: In Holland the wiſdom of the Government has appointed, at the principal ports in the territories of the republic, officers with ſuitable ſalaries, whoſe buſineſs it is to ſee certain laws of the country, relating to the packing of fiſh duly executed. Theſe laws ordain, that when herrings arrive in Holland from the fiſhing,

fiſhing, they ſhall be all unpacked out of the barrels in which brought, and cleaned and aſſorted. It would only conſume time, to enter here into a minute account of the Dutch proceſs of curing. Suffice it to ſay, it is ſimple; and the whole ſecret is, cleanlineſs and exactneſs; cleanlineſs, in refreſhing the herrings from all the blood and dirt, which the firſt ſalting had extracted from them; and exactneſs, in ſorting them into caſks, according to their ſeveral qualities and ſizes. The caſks are marked by the proper officers on the head, to authenticate their quality, contents, and country; and thus made ready for market, they recommend themſelves wherever they are ſent. So wiſely jealous are the Dutch, of the character of their fiſh, that it is unlawful

lawful for any of their ſubjects to carry fiſh to market from the fiſhing grounds, without firſt landing and repacking them in Holland, in the manner deſcribed. The Scotch practice forms a complete contraſt to that here deſcribed; of which any one may ſatisfy himſelf, who ſhall ever ſee the dirty method of managing herrings at Greenock, the principal mart for theſe fiſh in the kingdom. In our opinion, an attention to this important circumſtance, is a ſtep abſolutely neceſſary, in the very firſt inſtance, for encouraging the Fiſheries. The neceſſity of it, after what we have ſaid upon the confined ſale of Britiſh herrings, muſt ſtrike every one: it is clear, from what has been ſaid, that additional encouragements beſtowed upon the Fiſhery, would operate

rate contrary ways, until markets are opened for the fiſh: It is as clear, that markets cannot be found for the fiſh, until they are able, by their quality, to recommend themſelves. Therefore we argue, that an attention to the circumſtance in queſtion, muſt precede every farther encouragement of moment.

In conſidering how the purpoſe here aimed at could be brought about, we can ſee no plan more feaſible, than the bringing over into this country, and ſettling, at the Joint-ſtock Company's villages, a few natives of Holland, who have had experience in curing herrings, for the purpoſe of inſtructing the cures there in the Dutch method. As there would not be occaſion for many of theſe Dutch,

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it might be done in a private manner, and offence to the Government of that country accordingly avoided. Indeed, ſo few would be needed, that the meaſure, ſhould it ever be known in Holland, could hardly excite any jealouſy. We ſuppoſe the expence neceſſary to entice theſe people to come over, and to remain in this country, could not be a great inconveniency to the funds of the Joint Stock-Company, eſpecially if (as is not to be doubted,) the Company received the aid of the Society. If theſe Dutchmen did their duty, and if the curers upon the Weſt Coaſt paid proper attention to the directions of the foreigners, the probable conſequences would be, that better herrings would ſoon appear at the Scotch market, from the Company's villages, than thoſe caught

caught by the buſſes belonging to the merchants at Port-Glaſgow, Greenock, Campbeltown, &c.; and this again would bring it about, that theſe people would, in ſelf-defence, be obliged to have recourſe to alluring ſome Dutch curers to come in amongſt them. This laſt would be a ſalutary meaſure for the country, and would flow from the plan we have now recommended. It is natural to ſuppoſe, that it would be only *gradually*, that the curers in Scotland would diſcover the neceſſity of procuring Dutch teachers; which would be a convenient circumſtance, as by that means the Dutch could be brought into this country by piece-meal unnoticed, and ſo offence to the Government of their country avoided.

We

We have already declared our ſentiments, that, in the preſent ſtate of the trade, more exertions in favours of the fiſhery, are almoſt precluded. There is very little more left for us to ſay upon that part of our ſubject, *by itſelf*. As has been already ſtated, various hindrances and obſtructions in the way of the fiſhery, contained in former revenue-laws, are now cleared away. The bounty from Government, upon the tonage of the buſſes, is equitable and liberal, as is the premiums upon the fiſh exported: The trade was never leſs cramped than it is at this day. The encouragements are fitting, and ought to animate the fiſhers to aim at curing their fiſh properly, as the beſt means to preſerve a trade, which, from the combined circumſtances of great indul-

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gences granted to it at home, and the indifferent character of our herrings abroad, is in ſome danger of being overdone or loſt.

We now come to ſpeak of the Highland coaſt, and that country in general, and its concerns, which immediately brings to our view, the eſtabliſhments ſet on foot by the Joint-ſtock Company, in their villages of Toppermorry and Ullapool. And here we cannot refrain from droping our ſubject for a little while, to expreſs our warm and hearty approbation of the truly virtuous conduct of thoſe worthy patriots, who have thrown luſtre on the times we live in, by their generous and amiable conduct; evincing themſelves at once the friends of mankind and of their

country. Their names will be mentioned by grateful posterity, when the blessings which their wise and praiseworthy counsels have planted, are matured and ripened, and when they themselves are no more.

The Author of this paper is not acquainted with the situation of the village of Toppermorry. The situation of the other settlement at Ullapool, he has had occasion to know well: he has traversed a great part of the West coast, and resided ten years in that country. He must certainly say, that those who advised the Company to set down a village at Ullapool, did not mislead it; for the circumstances which should determine the situation of a village upon the coasts of the West Highlands, from our knowledge

ledge of that country, meet all together in the ſituation of Ullapool.

But to be better underſtood, and to anſwer in this place one of the requiſitions of the Society's ſaid advertiſement, we ſhall ſtate, *what in our opinion are the circumſtances*, which ſhould determine the ſituation of a village on the coaſts of the Highlands.

The *firſt* thing, therefore, in our judgment, which ſhould determine the preference in favours of any one place as the ſtance of a fiſhing village, upon the coaſts of the Weſt Highlands, is, that ſuch place, or its vicinity, ſhall be noted, by long experience, as the principal reſort of fiſh (particularly of herrings, upon that part of the coaſt).

This conſideration ought to out-weigh every other one; and though other places might poſſeſs all other requiſites for the ſtance of a village, yet, if not in the neighbourhood of a good fiſhing ground, a village, in the preſent ſtate of the Highland coaſt, ſhould not be built there, but at the beſt fiſhing place, provided it be not impracticable, from the face of the country, (which is the caſe at ſome places on the Weſt coaſt) to ſet down a village, and to accommodate the ſettlers with even ſmall gardens there.

Next, if there are two or more places, equally remarkable for the greateſt reſort of herrings upon that part of the coaſt, ſurely the preference ſhould be given to that place, where there is the greateſt

greateſt quantity of arable, or at leaſt improveable, level land.

Again, if there are two or more places upon any one part of the coaſt, equally noted for theſe two advantages, the preference no doubt ſhould be given to the one, from which a road to communicate with the Low-country could be cheapeſt made. Oeconomy is highly neceſſary: and therefore preference ſhould be given to the cheapeſt road, though longeſt, provided the difference of diſtance be not attended with any conſiderable diſadvantage to the inhabitants of the propoſed village. It is almoſt needleſs to explain here how the longeſt road may be cheapeſt. Every gentleman of the Society knows that the Highland country is incumbered

with rocks, and interſected by many rivulets, and that a mile of road in ſome places, will coſt more money than to make twenty in other places. But from what we have ſaid, it muſt not be inferred, that we propoſe placing the villages at a diſtance from the Low-country, rather than near it. This is the fartheſt thing imaginable from our meaning. What we urge is, that a cheap long road, would probably be more convenient for the funds deſtined to the encouragement of the Fiſhery, than a ſhort, but expenſive one: If any place upon the Weſt coaſt is found, poſſeſſed of the two firſt qualifications we have mentioned, and from whence a road could be made, cheaper than from any other part poſſeſſed of like qualifications, the ſhortneſs of the road would

enhance

enhance the value of the ſituation, and it ought immediately to be made choice of for the ſite of a village.

Next, if there are two or more places upon that part of the coaſt, which ſhall be equally in poſſeſſion of all the local advantages we have mentioned, we would prefer the one for building our village upon, which ſhould be known to be beſt frequented by haddocks, and other ſmall fiſh; becauſe theſe would afford ſome ſubſiſtence to the inhabitants of the village, when the herring-fiſhing ſhould happen in any one year to fail.

Laſtly, we reckon the neighbourhood of peat-moſs in one place, and not in another, if both are equally poſſeſſed of the local advantages already mentioned,

a good reaſon for preferring the place where moſs is found, to the other, for building a fiſhing village upon.

Should all theſe local advantages meet, in any ſituation upon the Highland coaſt, we may ſafely pronounce, that ſuch ſituation is the very place proper for building the propoſed village upon. To the great credit of the adviſers of the meaſure of building there, the village of Ullapool will be found to be poſſeſſed of all theſe advantages. It is not only the beſt ſituation for a village, upon the northern diſtrict of the Weſt coaſt, but (if we are not miſinformed) it is the very beſt, from at leaſt Toppermorry all along the whole range of the Weſt coaſt, to the North-eaſtermoſt point of this part of the united kingdom.

dom. Ullapool is in the very centre of the beſt fiſhing grounds for herrings in Scotland: there is a fine flat of land there, moſt of it arable, and the reſt very improveable. The making a road from it to the Low-country, will be cheaper and eaſier, than from any other part of the North-Weſt coaſt we know. In the bay of Ullapool (a ſmooth land-locked corner of Loch-broom) ſome of the fineſt haddocks and other kind of fiſh are to be found at almoſt all ſeaſons of the year, within two or three hundred yards of the doors of the reſidenters there; and there is, in the hills at the back of the level land at Ullapool, moſs inexhauſtible. If, therefore, the village of Ullapool does not thrive, there muſt be very ſmall hopes, that one built upon any other part

part of the Weſt coaſt will ſucceed.

In what we have ſaid reſpecting the circumſtances, which ſhould weigh principally in ſetting down a village upon the Weſt Highland coaſt, we apprehend our reaſons for the eſtimation in which we have held each circumſtance, and the conſequent priority of order we have placed it in, are obvious, without any farther explanation; but our making ſo ſmall account of moſs, for the neceſſary article of fuel, as to conſider it as the *laſt* and *leaſt* object, to be taken into the reckoning, in ſelecting a ſituation for a village, may require to be accounted for.

The Society is not to be informed, that the climate of the whole of the Weſt

Weſt coaſt of Scotland, is boiſterous, and ſubject to great rains. This circumſtance is very unfavourable to the gaining of peats: The making of fuel from moſs is one of the hardeſt pieces of work the Highlanders have to encounter. They dig their peats to-day: Some days after they lift them from the ground to dry: next day a hurricane of wind and rain throws them all down: They are ſet up again, and again ſhare the ſame fate. By this time the ſeaſon is gone, and the poor people are obliged to put the peats in a wet ſtate up into ſtacks. Thus their time is conſumed, their bodies toiled, and, after all, their purpoſe is not attained; for the peats ſtacked wet will not burn, and they are conſequently in great miſery, with ſmoke and cold, through the winter.

For

For theſe reaſons, we look upon the neighbourhood of moſs, to be the very *leaſt* conſideration in chooſing the ſtance of a village. Coals may be furniſhed to the inhabitants of ſuch village perhaps cheaper (every thing conſidered) than peats, though they ſhould even have the moſs at their doors. But, at any rate, it would be extremely proper in the Joint-ſtock Company, in the preſent infancy of their village, to lay in a ſtock of coals at Ullapool. Were a conſiderable fiſhing to ſtrike up there, during the time the people were at work with their peats, (which very often happens) they would be reduced to the dilemma, of either loſing the fiſhing, or ſtarving with cold through the winter; both theſe inconveniencies would be prevented, by the Company having

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on hand a quantity of coals, ready to anſwer ſuch an emergency.

We ſhall now beg leave to make ſome obſervations upon what the Joint-ſtock Company has done at its two ſaid villages. The Author of this paper has no view in communicating his ſentiments upon the matters now in hand, but, from a hearty wiſh for the proſperity of his native country, to endeavour to put in his mite of ſervice, to the laudable deſigns of the Society. This is not to be done, by writing fine flowery language, or ſmooth turned periods, but by faithfully ſtating his opinion, derived from an experience acquired by a reſidence in the Highlands. Truth is at all times ſalutary. Burniſhed falſehoods, (which have been too much uſed upon this ſub-

ject of the Fiſhery,) while they dazzle, are ſure to blind and miſlead.

The Author of this paper left that country ſome years ago, and before the undertakings were begun at Ullapool. From the information he has received, he finds that very conſiderable buildings are already erected there; a pier, an inn, a place of worſhip, and a ſchool-houſe; beſides, a number of ſmall houſes for fiſhers and tradeſmen, have been erected by individuals, aided, as we are informed, by the funds of the Company. Too much praiſe cannot be beſtowed upon thoſe perſons, who ſet on foot and encouraged this plan, of civilizing and improving that neglected corner of our native country. When we reflect upon the noble motives by which theſe perſons

ſons were actuated, it is exceeding difficult to find fault with any thing which has been done under their directions, or to touch upon any thing unpleaſant to them. Candour, however, and our profeſſed deſire of giving our undiſguiſed opinion, obliges us to obſerve, that it were to be wiſhed the Company had proceeded more ſlowly, in the laying out its money, and done ſome of its works upon a ſmaller ſcale, particularly the inn at Ullapool, which is moſt unneceſſarily large. Probably it would have been better, had the Company oeconomiſed as much as it could, in order that it might be the better enabled to advance the conſiderable ſums which will be wanted for that abſolutely neceſſary meaſure, of making and keeping up roads of communica-

tion betwixt their villages and the Low-countries.

The eſtabliſhing ſome uſeful manufacture in the villages, and the making of theſe roads, we look upon as the principal conſiderations in the whole buſineſs of theſe new erections, *ſo far as the Highlands is concerned.* The failure of the fiſhing upon that coaſt for a tract of years, (as has been formerly known to have happened) would have the effect to draw off all the adventurers in the fiſhing upon a large ſcale, which had ſettled there. The only thing, therefore, which would be left as an inducement to the lower order of people to remain at the villages, would be the manufacture mentioned, and the facility with which they could communicate with

with the Low-country. The poor people who remained, would be thus enabled to carry on ſome little trade; and, by maintaining their hold, prevent all which the Company ſhall do from being totally loſt, which would otherwiſe inevitably happen, if the herrings ſhould abandon the Weſt coaſt for any conſiderable ſpace of time; theſe fiſh have been known to diſappear upon that coaſt, for upwards of twenty years. Thus, roads would be a great benefit to the villages, in caſe of the worſt happening. If the villages are proſperous, roads would infinitely increaſe their proſperity, by putting it in the power of the leſſer fiſhers in theſe hamlets, to convey their fiſh freſh to the towns in the Low-country, where they would fetch great prices. Upon the ſubject

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of the manufacture proper to be introduced into the fiſhing villages, we ſhall reſerve ourſelves, until we come to ſpeak of the improvements which the inferior parts of the Highlands will admit of; becauſe the kind of manufacture proper to be eſtabliſhed there, and the manner of conducting it, will equally apply to the Coaſts of the Highlands.

It is a melancholy conſideration, when one reflects, that in a country, famous throughout the World for the wiſdom and liberality of its civil polity, the maxims which that polity ſhould dictate, are, in the caſe we are now ſpeaking of, ſo much departed from, that the ſettling and civilizing the remote parts of the Empire, is not done under the direction, or at the expence, of the Government

ment of the country, but is laid upon the ſhoulders of individuals, who, anxious for the public welfare, do it voluntarily out of their own eſtates, rather than fruitleſly apply for the aid of the State. A Frenchman or a Swiſs, would hardly give credit to this relation. In theſe countries, even when one of them was ſhackled under an arbitrary Monarchy, works, the carrying on of which would bring advantage to the whole Community, were done at the expence of that Community. Some French authors have, with great ſucceſs, ſhown in their writings, that the ſettling remote parts in a kingdom, and opening communications betwen theſe and the more civilized parts, ought to be the buſineſs of every well-ordered State.

But

But if our Governors are so torpid, as not to trouble themselves about such public services as that we are now speaking of, but to allow the charge of doing it to fall upon the virtuous individuals, whose zeal and anxiety for their country has led them to take the business upon themselves, yet surely they will, for very shame, now that they see so much done, give their consent, that the expence of making these necessary roads, shall be defrayed out of the public purse. This is an event devoutly to be wished for; and the Society, and all the friends of the Fisheries, and of the Highlands, should use their best endeavours to bring it about. It would relieve the Joint-stock Company of a very heavy burden, and lighten the loss, which it is not impossible may arise,

riſe, when the Company ſhall come to balance accompts with theſe eſtabliſhments it ſhall have foſtered.

It will coſt the miniſter very little trouble to do this favour to the Company, and this duty to his country. The beſt way for him to do it, would be to lay a ſmall tax upon the ton of every veſſel, employed in the herring-fiſheries in Scotland, for the ſpecial purpoſe of making and maintaining theſe roads; the Company, or a committee of it, to be the truſtees, under the act impoſing the tax, for ſeeing the money duly applied. No body would grumble at this tax. A ſhilling a ton upon the buſſes, might produce about 800 l. *per annum*, upon the credit of which, the Company might borrow 6000 l. or 7000 l.; a ſum,

ſum, it is apprehended, ſufficient to make the roads at preſent needed. The roads once made, the tax might be mitigated, except ſo much as was neceſſary to keep them in repair. It would be bad policy in the preſent ſtate of that country, to propoſe a turnpike upon theſe roads. We are ſenſible, that the ſum above mentioned is not ſufficient to make the roads in queſtion, *and alſo the bridges* which would be requiſite upon theſe roads; but the making the roads is the firſt thing to be done; which, if found of utility, there will then be encouragement to build bridges. It may be objected, that a tax upon the buſſes would be improper; but as it would be but a ſmall one, and as the owners of the buſſes would be much benefited by theſe roads, it may be ſuppoſed they would

would think the payment of the tax no hardſhip. At preſent, when a buſs has caught as many herrings as will load her, ſhe departs for her port; and, let the fiſh be ever ſo plenty, ſhe can derive no farther benefit from them; but if the roads in queſtion are once made, the buſſes will find ſale for ſuch herrings as they may catch, after they have made their cargoes; for not only the country people, but ſtrangers from the Lowlands, will buy their ſurplus herrings, when they can take them away in carts, which at preſent they cannot do. Beſides this, by means of good roads from the weſtern fiſhing-grounds, to Inverneſs, &c., any buſs which may come by a misfortune, can be ſupplied with ſails, cordage, &c. from theſe places, inſtead of being obliged to go

to

to her port (at the diſtance perhaps of an hundred miles) for that purpoſe, by which delay ſhe might loſe the fiſhing for that ſeaſon.

We have already diſcloſed our ſentiments, that in the preſent ſcarcity of market for Britiſh herrings, by unneceſſarly puſhing the Fiſhery, and laviſhing encouragements upon it, an evil may ariſe to the country inſtead of a good: for this reaſon, we think the Joint-ſtock Company ſhould proceed in their buildings with cautious ſteps. We do not ſay that they have already built enow of houſes at their two ſaid villages, but our ſincere belief is, that it would neither be for the Company's own intereſt, nor for that of the Community, to proceed very much farther,

ther, until more markets are ſecured for Britiſh herrings. A town in a fertile country, may be ſupported alone by the reſidence of gentry in it, a retail trade, and public hoſtelaries; but, in the Highlands, it is a manufacture or fiſhery which muſt ſupport any appearance of a collected ſociety; therefore, inſtead of expending money upon buildings, which may never be inhabited, or which, if inhabited, will only help to fill the market with a commodity in no great requeſt; we would humbly incline to think the Company ſhould very ſoon ſuſpend its operations, until the effects of the experiments it is now making ſhall be a little known. At the ſame time, we are under no difficulty in ſaying, that we think the beſt application of the Company's funds *now*, would be,

firſt, to encourage ſome Dutch curers to ſettle at the two villages, for the purpoſe of teaching the people there the true method of preſerving herrings: And, *ſecondly*, (if no aid can be obtained from Government) to apply part of theſe funds to the making and upholding proper roads, betwixt the ſaid villages and the Low-lands. In the preſent ſtate of the fiſhing trade, theſe two meaſures, in our opinion, are what the Company ſhould direct its principal attention to.

Having ſaid thus much, regarding what the Joint-ſtock Company have with the moſt laudable intentions done for this conntry, it falls next to be conſidered, by what encouragements the ſettlements already eſtabliſhed by the

Company,

Company, may be beſt preſerved during their infancy, and until full time is given to make a fair experiment of their utility.

We ſhall not heſitate to ſay, that, in our opinion, the ſooner theſe villages are left to uphold themſelves by their own exertions and induſtry, the better for the Company and the Community. Encouragements do not always produce the good effects they aim at, eſpecially when beſtowed by public bodies; although encouragements engage the ſober and induſtrious, they are alſo baits for the needy, the deſperate, and the idle. That induſtry depends as much, if not more, upon the ſpirit and diſpoſition of the people, as upon the encouragements held out to them, is fairly

exemplified in the hiſtory of the town of Stornoway already mentioned, which has thriven and grown rich, although for a conſiderable time, and till of late, in the hands of even ſeverity and exaction. At the ſame time that we ſay this, we are clearly of opinion, that all the individuals who are already invited, or whom it would be prudent hereafter to invite to theſe villages, ſhould have liberal inducements held out to them, to remain or ſettle there. The offering a houſe and garden to a ſettler *gratis*, may be an inducement to a wretch, who rather intends to beg than work, and he will be glad of the offer without any farther encouragement; but if the Company wiſh for induſtrious men, it muſt not only offer them a free houſe and garden, but

alſo

alſo a boat, nets, &c. upon credit: Even this is not enough: The accompliſhment of the Company's purpoſe (*viz.* keeping the ſettlers in the villages) will never be brought about, unleſs it ſhall find a market at their doors for the fiſh caught by their ſettlers. We do not mean by this, that the Company ſhould claim the pre-emption of all fiſh ſo caught; on the contrary, the ſettlers ſhould be encouraged by the Company obliging itſelf to take from off their hands all ſuch fiſh as they cannot diſpoſe of, and that, not at an under, but at a medium price. Thus, the Company muſt for ſome time be the purchaſers of fiſh: It muſt do more: for, with the price ſo given by the Company, to a ſettler for his fiſh, he cannot, in the preſent ſtate of the

villages and the country, procure the neceſſaries of life; therefore the Company, to effect its purpoſe, muſt engage itſelf to ſupply, at moderate prices, the ſettlers, at all times, for a certain period of years, with meal, butter, cheeſe, ſalt-beef, ſhoes, linen, ready-made fiſher-jackets, &c. and coals, if demanded. Coals, it will be abſolutely neceſſary the Company ſhould provide, for the reaſons we have given upon the 96th page of this paper. Without ſuch encouragements are granted to the villagers for ſome time, we are of opinion, the ſettlements will only languiſh, and at laſt die. It is almoſt needleſs here to obſerve, that the Company, in its mercantile capacity, muſt provide buildings for ſheltering, and alſo materials for curing ſuch fiſh as may be ſo offer-

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ed by the ſettlers, as well as ſtore-houſes, for the articles of conſumption we have mentioned. The Company ſhould not however engage itſelf to theſe conditions long. If the Fiſhery ſucceeds, and Britiſh herrings ſhall open a market for themſelves, by the improvements which may be hereafter made in curing them, the conſequent proſperity of the villages will open reſources to the ſettlers for ſupplying themſelves, upon perhaps better terms than the Company could afford.—Upon the whole, we are of opinion, that the Company, while it on the one hand, for the reaſons we have urged, proceeds with caution, in not bringing too great a number of people into its villages, it ſhould, at the ſame time, on the other hand, grant due encouragement to thoſe perſons it may be

proper

proper to bring there, to induce them to come to, and remain in theſe ſettlements. This laſt is a meaſure abſolutely neceſſary, being the only chance for effecting the Company's purpoſe in any degree at all.

But there is a great difficulty remains, viz. What is to become of ſuch of the ſettlers as live alone by fiſhing, if, unhappily (as has been often experienced,) the herrings ſhould deſert the coaſt for ſome years running. In ſuch a caſe, it would be impoſſible for the Company to purchaſe their continuance at the village, at the dear rate of ſubſiſting them upon the Company's credit all that time, in proſpect of being paid by the after fiſhings of ſuch ſettlers: Even doing ſo for one or two years, would

would be too great a riſk for the Company to run. We own this is a very great dilemma.

The difficuly here ſtated, has often employed the thoughts of the Author of this paper; he has conſidered it with great attention, and, after the matureſt deliberation, he can only think of one thing, which would provide againſt it: Unfortunately, it is almoſt impoſſible to procure it: Its name is, *The Liberality of the Government of Great Britain, to that part of the Kingdom called Scotland.*

As we before noted, the facilitating the improvement of remote and uncultivated parts of any kingdom is ſurely the proper buſineſs of the Government of

that ſtate or kingdom. It would be fortunate for the Community, if the managers of ſtate-affairs in this country were of a like opinion with us. The building the villages, making the roads, purchaſing the fiſh, and ſupplying the ſettlers, ought in good policy to have been done at the expence, and under the direction of Government: If any profit accrued by the buſineſs, the public revenue would have been encreaſed by it: If any loſs, it would juſtly have fallen upon the Community at large. The idea of a Government purchaſing herrings from its ſubjects is not a new one: In England, Edward the 3d did ſo; and the practice was continued by his ſucceſſors down to Queen Elizabeth. Should it ever unfortunately happen, that the herring-fiſhing ſhould fall off, owing

owing to there being too many caught for the markets,—from the debaſement of the character of our fiſh, or from other circumſtances now unforeſeen, a miniſter would be obliged to have recourſe to this meaſure, if he meant not to loſe the ſtrength which is derived to our navy from the numbers of ſeamen which the Fiſhery nurſes up.

Though we are not ſanguine in our expectations, that Government will either aid the Joint-ſtock Company, to enable it to retain the ſettlers in the villages during unſucceſsful fiſhing years, or appropriate money for making and mantaining the roads we have been ſpeaking of, yet it is impoſſible for us to allow ourſelves for a moment to think, that any miniſter of this country will

will ever go about to endeavour to put a negative upon any motion which may be made for indemnifying the Joint-ſtock Company for ſuch loſſes, (if any ſuch there are) which it ſhall appear, upon taking leave of the ſaid eſtabliſhments, the Company ſhall have *bona fide* ſuſtained. The honour and juſtice of this country would be engaged in this meaſure, and certainly the repreſentatives of this part of the kingdom in Parliament, will, whether of the miniſter's party or not, to a man join in ſupport of ſo juſt and equitable a propoſal.

We have already taken notice of the neglect which every thing relating to this country meets with in the Britiſh Parliament: At whoſe door does this evil

evil originate? We may charge it upon the indifferency of the Engliſh members about Scotch affairs: But candour obliges us at ſame time to ſay, that we are afraid part of the evil is chargeable upon our own members, who are rather paſſive in matters which concern their native country.

While we thus blame Government for being careleſs about the concerns of Scotland, it is however no more than juſtice to ſay, that the extravagant propoſals for taking money out of the public purſe, for the particular benefit of this country, which has been made, might very probably affrighten miniſters at the whole buſineſs of the Scotch Fiſheries. The Committee of the Houſe of Commons upon the Fiſhery, amongſt

other things, which in our opinion would have created a moſt needleſs expence, reported to the Houſe, that it was neceſſary to eſtabliſh a Board of ſub-commiſſioners of the revenue at Inverneſs; and that ſundry new Sheriffſhips were neceſſary in Scotland. Surely theſe demands had better been let alone: The fact is, that too much has been wrote and ſaid about the Fiſhery. Every one has it in his mouth; but we may ſay (we hope without offence or arrogance) that, comparatively ſpeaking, few underſtand it. Hence the ſcheme is diſtracted with the plans of every idle projector, who with his propoſals increaſes the mountain of ſpeculative ſtuff, and ſtill farther deters thoſe in power from meddling with a buſineſs ſo unſhapely. Inſtead of the

Society

Society therefore advertiſing for information, we doubt not but it would be more for the benefit of what it wiſhes to promote, if the Society ſhall hereafter, without ſuch precarious aſſiſtance, think for itſelf upon the ſubject of the Fiſheries, and the improvement of the Highlands, which moſt of the members of the Society, from their knowledge of that country, are very competent to do.

Before we leave off concerning the fiſhing villages, we ſhall beg liberty to mention to the Society a matter which in our humble opinion deſerves its attention.—It is an improvement in the power of the Society or the Joint-ſtock Company to compaſs.

Upon the Weſt coaſt, during the fiſhing ſeaſon, when a body of herrings enters one of the lochs, it is not long before the whole fleet of herring buſſes follow them. There is not any thing better known by the fiſhermen, than that herrings are not fond of remaining in a loch where they are moleſted with the frequent daſhing of oars, and too many veſſels and boats paſſing and re-paſſing; and that accordingly, when thus treated, they ſoon depart. This evil (and a great one it is) might be eaſily prevented: We think it would be an object for the Joint-ſtock Company or the Society, to aſk from Government the ſervice of a ſmall Admiralty cutter during the fiſhing ſeaſon. On board of this veſſel a ſuperintendant ſhould be ſent, who ſhould be a man of character, of experience

experience and abilities, and whoſe orders the commander of the cutter ſhould be obliged to obey. This ſuperintendant's buſineſs ſhould be, to judge what number of veſſels and boats ought to be allowed to enter any loch, where there is a ſhoal of herrings. He ſhould be inveſted with an authority from the vice-admiral of Scotland, to take cognizance of treſpaſſes upon the water, and to commit offenders by his own warrant: His powers ſhould alſo enable him to determine upon any diſpute, which may ariſe amongſt the fiſhers about the ſituation of their nets, or other differences. The Author of this paper has been an eye-witneſs of the neceſſity of ſuch a meaſure as he is now recommending: He has ſeen the crews of the buſſes from the Clyde &c. at-

tack the poor natives of the West coast in their miserable canoes, drive them from the best fishing places, destroy their nets, cruelly maltreat them, and then let down their own tackling, in the places of which they had thus robbed the poor natives. The superintendant might have the benefit of an assistant, and two or three inferior officers; and, that the public might be as much benefited as possible, in return for the expence which salaries to this establishment would create, both the principal superintendant and his colleague, should be vested with powers to sit and act at the villages, as ordinary judges, in disputes about property, to a certain extent: And, if it was thought necessary, they might be farther intrusted with a power to judge of, and pronounce sentence

upon

upon, leſſer crimes committed at the villages and upon the coaſt.

We are not unacquainted, that there is at preſent an officer appointed, under the Board of Truſtees for Fiſheries and manufactures, called *fiſhing baillie*, with authority to ſettle diſputes amongſt the fiſhers; but we are afraid his powers are too limited, and he has no aſſiſtance to enforce the execution of his own awards. It may be proper for us here by the by to obſerve, that we doubt if, without an expreſs law, the meaſure of hindering an improper number of buſſes from entering a loch into which a ſhoal of herrings had got, could be defended. But we think the adopting ſuch a regulation is of ſo much conſequence, that it is, *even* in the *preſent* ſtate of the herring

ring-fiſhery, an object to endeavour to get an enactment of the Legiſlature to authoriſe it.

It may perhaps be expected, that we ſhould here ſay ſomething about the the queſtion which has been broached, Whether a deep ſea fiſhing, or a loch fiſhing, is the beſt?

After having already declared our opinion, that, by the preſent modes of fiſhing, there are at leaſt as many herrings caught as the market demands, it would be an unbefitting taſk for us to enter upon recommending any particular plan as the *beſt* for catching herrings; but, for the information of ſuch of our readers as may have perhaps never heard of the queſtion, we ſhall ſtate as briefly as

as poſſible what occurs to us upon the ſubject.

Some have vehemently argued for a deep-ſea fiſhing, as infinitely preferable to fiſhing in lochs. This doctrine, upon which much has been ſaid, affords a very proper inſtance in proof of our aſſertion, that more has been wrote upon the Fiſhery than has been underſtood about it.

The advocates for a deep-ſea fiſhing quote the example of the Dutch, who fiſh in this manner. It is very true the Dutch do ſo: But when we enquire, Why? we find, it is becauſe they have it not in their power to do otherwiſe with profit. The Dutch have only two choices; that is, either to fiſh in the

the deep upon the coaſt of Shetland, or ſail through the Pentland Firth, and fiſh in the weſtern lochs of Scotland. This laſt would be ſo long a voyage, and the navigating the difficult ſtrait of the Pentland Firth, ſo hard for veſſels of the conſtruction of their buſſes, that this method would not anſwer them. Of the two evils, therefore, annexed to the ſituation of their country for fiſhing, they wiſely make election of the leaſt, viz. fiſhing in the deep-ſea, becauſe the ſhallow fiſhing-grounds are too far off for them. The Dutch have upon their own coaſts no lochs, bays, or in-lets of the ſea, to which the herrings reſort; they are therefore obliged to ſeek them in the deep, at double the riſk and expence at which they could fiſh them in embayed ſhallow places,

ſuch

ſuch as the lochs of Scotland. The inhabitants of this country (more eſpecially thoſe upon the Weſt coaſt) would be extremely unwiſe indeed, were they to be at the great expence of materials for a deep-ſea fiſhing, and expoſe their buſſes to ſo much tear and wear, when every purpoſe they aim at is better anſwered by their fiſhing in the lochs uſually haunted by the herrings with their ſhort nets, at a leſs expence by one half at leaſt, laying out of the queſtion the riſk of loſing both veſſel and nets in the winter time in the open ſea; a fate which the Dutch often experience. The Dutch would never hunt the fiſh through ſeas, which are ſome times tempeſtuous even in Summer, were it not impoſſible for them (with any advantage) to ſail to the Weſt lochs

of

Scotland, where (when they ſhould arrive there) we have ſome doubts if they would be allowed to fiſh. The deep-ſea fiſhing is not only very expenſive and perilous, but alſo very uncertain; for the herrings, while in deep water, are for the moſt part in an itinerant diſpoſition. It is well known that owing to this, the Dutch are very often unſucceſsful; a fact, which the gentlemen who argue for a deep-ſea fiſhing paſs over in ſilence. It is a ſtrange argument, indeed, that becauſe the Dutch are good fiſhers, therefore we are to imitate them in all things regarding the Fiſhery, even in that which they themſelves conſider as a very *great diſadvantage*. The doing ſo would be as unwiſe as the conduct of a perſon, who, wiſhing to imitate the dreſs and exte-

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rior of ſome beau, would, in order to conform exactly to his pattern, break a limb, becauſe the perſon he wiſhed to copy had come by that misfortune.

It may be here proper to obſerve, that the advocates for a deep-ſea fiſhing, have not only quoted the example of the Dutch, but alſo that of the Yarmouth people, in inſtance of this practice. The latter do not however make a choice of that method any more than the former: their doing ſo is the effect of neceſſity, becauſe the herrings, which uſually appear once a year upon the Yarmouth coaſt, do not come into ſhallow water. It is the peculiar advantage of the Highland coaſt, to be cut and indented all along with in-lets and bays: to theſe the herrings are fond of

reſorting: on the coaſt of England, there are no ſuch in-lets: the fiſh, accordingly, which appear there, keep a conſiderable way from the ſhore in deep water, and the fiſhers muſt take them there or not at all.

If it ſhall be ſaid, that the reaſon given for the Dutch not going to the Highland lochs, cannot be aſſigned as the cauſe why the Yarmouth people do not go there, ſeeing they are almoſt as near theſe lochs as ſome of the fiſhers on the eaſt of Scotland, who go; We anſwer, That the Yarmouth people, preferring fiſhing upon their own coaſt for herrings in deep water, to going to the Weſt lochs for theſe fiſh, does by no means prove that they eſteem the deep-ſea fiſhing as ſuperior to the other; it

only ſhews, that the Yarmouth people give preference to that mode, which is not only eaſieſt for them, but alſo (conſidering their great diſtance from the Weſt coaſt, and the expenſive way in which the Engliſh victual their veſſels) the cheapeſt. Thus we ſee, that both the Dutch and Yarmouth people follow that method of fiſhing which is *beſt* adapted to their reſpective ſituations. The Scotch, by fiſhing in ſhallow water, do the ſame. If theſe premiſes are granted, (and we think they muſt) we are logically entitled to ſay, that all idea of the fiſhers of this country adopting any other method of fiſhing for herrings is precluded; for, being already in poſſeſſion of the *beſt*, their choice can go no higher. We ſhall only farther obſerve on this branch of our ſubject,

that however fitting it might be for the fiſhers on the Eaſt coaſt of Scotland to follow the Dutch and Yarmouth methods, and avoid the troubleſome navigation of the Pentland Firth, yet ſurely no judicious man will ſay, that the fiſhers upon the Weſt coaſt ought to practiſe the deep-ſea fiſhing. So well aware of the expence and riſk of a deep-ſea fiſhing are the Eaſt coaſt herring fiſhers, that they take their chance of the Pentland Firth, for the ſake of the eaſy and ſafe fiſhing, which they find in the lochs to the weſtward of it. The advocates for a deep-ſea fiſhing recommend their plan to the eaſtern and weſtern Scotch fiſhers alike: How improperly they have done ſo, we have endeavoured to ſhow.

We

We ſhall here beg permiſſion to produce another proof of our aſſertion, that too much has been raſhly wrote and ſaid upon the Fiſhery. This is exemplified in a perſon of no leſs learning and conſequence than Dr Adam Smith, who maintained, That Government ought to withdraw the bounty, paid upon the tonage of *buſſes* employed in the Fiſhery, and give it to *boats only*, ſo employed. It is not eaſy to conceive how ſuch a notion could enter into the head of any man of Dr Smith's abilities and information. We have no way of ſolving the difficulty, but in ſuppoſing that the Doctor has not been *well* informed: He took up a notion, that the buſs-owners upon the Weſt coaſt ſent out their veſſels on *pretence only* of fiſhing, but in *reality* with an intent *to come at*

the bounty. Certainly in this caſe Dr Smith drew his concluſions from falſe premiſes: for, had he fairly informed himſelf of the actual coſt of the out-fit of a buſs, he would have found that ſuch a veſſel, equipped according to law, returning into port without any fiſh, would take every ſhilling of the bounty to defray her charges: Where then was the temptation to fraud? No matter: the Doctor would not part with his opinion: He made uſe of a pun, which he thought ſettled the buſineſs: They don't go out, ſays he, (meaning the buſſes) to *catch the fiſh*, but to *catch the bounty.* Luckily for the country, the Doctor's advice was not wholly taken: He ſaw the boats encouraged with a bounty, or at leaſt an indulgence equal to it; but the Legiſlature prudently continued the encouragements

couragements to the buſs-fiſhing upon the old footing, where it at preſent remains. We ſhall requeſt of our reader to reflect what the conſequences would have been, had Dr Smith's advice been taken: no leſs, we may ſafely pronounce, than the total annihilation of the trade of fiſhing in the whole towns in the river Clyde and its vicinity. The giving the bounty to *boats only* was, to be ſure, well calculated for the Eaſt coaſt of Scotland, where the Doctor reſided, and where, it would appear, he obtained all his knowledge concerning the Fiſhery; becauſe ſuch herrings as do appear there, come for the moſt part within a mile or ſo of the doors of the merchants ſtorehouſes; ſo that boats, in *their* ſituation, would have anſwered without any buſſes; by which means the whole enormous

normous expence of building, equipping, and manning the latter, would have been ſaved. This however would not have anſwered one of the great purpoſes of granting a bounty to the buſſes, viz. breading up ſeamen; and therefore the Legiſlature very properly reſiſted the propoſal. Were a bounty given only to boats, the fiſhers from Clyde, &c. would be virtually cut off from the benefit of it; becauſe, as the herrings very ſeldom appear in the neighbourhood of *their* towns, (where their ſalt and caſks are depoſited) but at the diſtance often of an hundred miles from theſe places, they would be under the neceſſity, in order to reap the benefit of a bounty upon boat fiſhing, of fitting out and mantaining large veſſels to accompany ſuch boats to the fiſhing grounds,

grounds, as a kind of floating ſtore-houſes and lodging houſes for their men. The boat-bounty would not indemnify this expence. The Doctor's meaſure would therefore in effect have cut off the Clyde fiſhers from *any bounty at all* to encourage them to fiſh; which we are well perſuaded would have put an end to their attempting it.

Such we ſee has been the giddineſs, with which not only leſſer writers, but alſo the luminaries of commercial reſearch, have run on, in writing and ſpeaking upon the Fiſhery, a ſubject, as we have already ſaid, which has been much perplexed by the hideous ſchemes of falſe reaſoners, and others unqualified to ſpeak properly upon it.

The

The lucubrations of the different attempters to ſet the country right about its Fiſhery, became at laſt ſo voluminous, and their different ſchemes, none of which hit the point, were ſo irreconcileable, that the whole formed a jumble, enough indeed to afrighten miniſters from looking into it; of courſe it has been partly neglected by them, as a fathomleſs buſineſs; a grand Elixir, always to be attempted, but never to be productive. From the ſame cauſes, ſome moderate and ſenſible men have drawn nearly the ſame concluſions; and thus unhappily an object, undoubtedly deſerving a due degree of national attention, has not yielded the benefit which might have been reaſonably expected to accrue to the country from it.

We

We have now finiſhed all we intended to ſay reſpecting the Fiſhery, throughout which we have regarded truth, either according to our own particular knowledge, or the beſt of our information; and have given our opinion after a thorough examination of the ſubject, according to the beſt of our judgement.

We ſhall now cloſe our deſign, by ſubmitting to the Society, our obſervations upon the *Utility of making ſome Eſtabliſhments in the Interior Parts of the Highlands*, the only requiſite of the Society's ſaid advertiſement which we believe remains to be ſpoken to.

OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE INTERIOR PARTS

OF THE

HIGHLANDS.

OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE INTERIOR PARTS

OF THE

HIGHLANDS.

ADDRESSED TO THE HIGHLAND SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND.

THE SOCIETY, it is presumed, are not to be informed, that about thirty years ago, and during the last reign, no less a sum than 3000 l. *per annum* was granted by Parliament for nine years, for encouraging the spinning of yarn and making of linen in the Highlands of Scotland, and for other purposes, for

the benefit of this country. The money, we believe, was granted out of the equivalent, which Scotland, at the Union claimed from England, for ſubjecting herſelf to the debts of the latter. The management of this deſign fell under the Board eſtabliſhed in this country for conſerving and encouraging its Fiſheries and Manufactures: In purſuance of the intention above mentioned, certain buildings were erected at Glenmorriſon in Inverneſs-ſhire, and at Loch-broom and Loch-Carron in Roſs-ſhire. Owing to what cauſes we know not, but at the expiry of the period limited by the act which granted the money, ſo little was the deſign of giving it found to be anſwered, that Government did not think fit to continue the encouragement, and the experiment has

has never ſince been again tried. The houſes erected for the purpoſes we have mentioned, which were very expenſive (and magnificent for that part of the country) are at this day occupied to various purpoſes, very different from the original deſign of them, and preſent a very melancholy picture to a perſon of reflection, who ſhall happen to paſs by them. One cannot help feeling ſome vexation, upon conſidering that ſuch capital ſums have been expended, without producing any of the good purpoſes for which they were granted. The people of the country, in the neighbourhood of theſe eſtabliſhments, know as much at this day, and no more, about ſpinning, weaving, flax-raiſing, &c. as they did fifty years ago. Surely (if we may expreſs ourſelves ſo) there has

been bad cookery here; for, in remote places in the Highlands, where women may be hired at a very cheap rate, *profit*, inſtead of *loſs*, ſhould have ariſen from their work. However, the fate of theſe undertakings is in conformity enough to paſt experience in things of the like nature: All encouragements, in which third parties muſt be employed between the giver and the receiver of ſuch encouragements, are leſs or more liable to the evils of fraud or jobbing; on which account, every mode of granting public encouragement, whether by the State, or individuals, which draws after it the neceſſity of erecting buildings for account of the party granting the encouragement, employing agents, clerks, &c. ſhould as much as poſſible be avoided.

Having

Having ſaid thus much, we are now to propoſe to the ſociety *our* plan of encouraging the population and proſperity of the Interior Parts of the Highlands.

We enter with real ſatisfaction upon this part of our deſign. What we are to propoſe, we think a practicable ſcheme, which ought to engage in its behalf every well-wiſher of our country. It needs no gilding or falſe repreſentation to recommend or ſupport it, and a trial at leaſt may be made of it. It would be an impertinent taſk to enter here into a deſcription of the vaſt extent of this part of the united kingdom, to which the appellation of Highlands properly belongs. This, as well as the great population of thoſe parts, is perfectly well known

known to every gentleman of the Society. We believe we do not exaggerate, when we ſay, that the inhabitants of thoſe parts of Scotland, known by the name of the Highlands, make up nearly two thirds of the whole of the population of that kingdom. What a pity it is, that their labours are not more uſeful to themſelves, and the community of which they are members. No people in the world are apter ſcholars at every thing which may be aſſigned them to do, or diſcover more ſagacity in the exerciſe of their reaſon: They are, for the moſt part, faithful ſervants, and prudent judicious maſters: The common people are ſober and ſteady, and entire ſtrangers to the diſſolute and wretched lives, which people of the ſame rank, in the more fertile parts of the kingdom, are known

known to lead: There is not ſuch a contented ſet of beings in the whole world, (if we except the happy peaſants in the vallies of Switzerland) as the ſmall tenantry of the Highlands. Let us here, in ſupport of our obſervation, bring to the recollection of ſome member of the Society, the ſatisfaction and peace he has ſeen within the walls of ſome poor Highlander, to whoſe houſe he has perhaps been driven by the ſtormy night. The ſocial fire, the woman of the cottage ſpinning upon the rock, the ſpare but wholeſome meal in preparation upon the fire for ſupper, the landlord's little live property ſecured from the threatening ſtorm in the other end of the cottage, and within view of the owner, who, to chear his wife and little ones, beguiles the ſolitary hour with the recital

cital of the atchievements of ſome valiant anceſtor in a ſong. To find ſuitable employment for theſe poor virtuous citizens and their progeny, is ſurely an object worthy of public attention. Great are the obligations which the Community is under to thoſe patriotic individuals who have generouſly undertaken this taſk: we hope that, while they thus ſerve their country, their laudable zeal will at ſame time be compenſated, by the increaſe in value which their property muſt experience in conſequence of the meaſures taken by them.

In the hiſtories of civilized countries, well adapted for cultivation, we find that tillage has uſually been the firſt thing which has occupied the attention

tention of the inhabitants: manufactures and trade came afterwards. On the other hand, in countries leſs fertile, manufactures and trade, inſtead of being conſequences of an improved ſtate of the country, have themſelves been in effect the cauſes of the cultivation of the ſoil.

The inland parts of the Highlands of Scotland are not fertile: they are however pretty populous; which circumſtance, by due management, might be made amply to compenſate both the want of ſoil and climate. The way in which this is to be done, is, by introducing into thoſe parts ſome kind of uſeful manufacture.

The Highlands at preſent does not reap the

the benefit of its conſiderable population: there are more people there than the produce of the land can well maintain: they are on that account obliged to wander to other places in queſt of employment, and to become a kind of vagabonds upon the earth. What relief, then, ſo natural, as to find them employment at home, in a manufacture, which if well conducted, would not only make individuals live comfortably, but, by means of the money ſuch manufacture would bring into the country, the ſoil would be improved, the value of land raiſed, and employment found for numbers of the natives in agriculture.

Though there are ſome obſtacles in the way of effecting this happy purpoſe, yet they can be removed at an expence in-

inconſiderable, when compared to the advantages, which would be derived from ſuch a meaſure: The *firſt* of theſe obſtacles is, that the people in the inland parts of the Highlands are not at preſent collected into towns or villages; and the *ſecond*, that there are not proper roads of communication betwixt that country and the more populous parts of the kingdom.

Having ſatisfied ourſelves with regard to the practicability of what we have propoſed, as well as its utility, we ſhall proceed to obſerve to the Society, that, in conſidering the ſubject before us, we have no heſitation in declaring, that we queſtion if it would be adviſeable to attempt a village in any of the interior parts of the Highlands, (or

even if it would be practicable to keep the people together in such village) without some kind of manufacture were established in it. A parcel of poor people, to be sure, might be brought together, allured by the advantage of having a house and a bit of ground *gratis*, or such like encouragements: But what benefit would the country at large derive from such a measure? Even the neighbourhood of a village without a manufacture in it, would have very little advantage by it, farther than the convenience of being near perhaps a small retail shop, or an artificer: part of the earnings of these tradesmen might probably find its way into the pockets of such farmers in the neighbourhood as could spare of their produce to sell to the village: but if

every

every ſhilling ſo earned was to be ſpent in the ſame way (a ſuppoſition not very probable) this would not be bringing any money into the country.

Allowing, however, ſuch an intercourſe would be an advantage to a neighbourhood, we doubt if a place could be found in the inland Highlands, whoſe neighbourhood, in its preſent ſtate, could afford buſineſs to ſupport ſuch a village as we have mentioned. In a cultivated country, a town may be up-held by its immediate neighbourhood, or by enjoying the benefit of lying at the entrance to a Highland country; but, in an uncultivated country like the inland Highlands, ſuch an idea is entirely precluded. If a village in the inland Highlands in the preſent

ſtate of that country, could not be ſupported by its neighbourhood, it is ſtill leſs ſuppoſeable that ſuch village could ſupport itſelf: Therefore, in our humble apprehenſion, every idea of erecting a village in the country in queſtion, without eſtabliſhing a manufacture in it, is a wrong one, and will, we imagine, be found not to anſwer. We may lay it down as a maxim, in this caſe, that if a village in the inland parts of the Highlands does not benefit its neighbourhood more than its neighbourhood benefits it, the intention of building ſuch village (*viz.* to find employment for the people, and to improve and raiſe the value of the land) is not anſwered. We have ſeen that a village without a manufacture

manufacture could not support itself, far less better the country; therefore it is clear, that the erecting such a village would not answer the end which undoubtedly the Society aim at. We may add, that not only ought a village in the country in question to be independent of its neighbourhood, in the present state of that country, for trade to support it; but also measures should be taken to render such a village independent of its neighbourhood, for the chief articles of subsistence; a precaution absolutely necessary for the preservation of a settlement of this kind, until the country around it shall be in some sort fit to supply it with necessaries.

Having thus, as we imagine, ſufficiently proven, that the bringing money into the inland Highlands, by means of ſome manufacture, is the beſt way in which the Society's great end of employing the people, and improving the ſoil, can be brought about; and having alſo endeavoured to ſhow, that the erecting villages without eſtabliſhing ſuch manufactures in them, would fall ſhort of effecting the Society's ſaid purpoſes; we come next to propoſe the kind of manufacture, in our opinion proper to be firſt ſo introduced, the ſcale it ſhould be taken up upon, and the manner, in our opinion, in which it ſhould be conducted.

In conſidering this ſubject, we are not perplexed with many choices: There

There are, in our humble opinion, only two manufactures, which, in the preſent ſtate of the interior part of the Highlands, it would be proper to introduce into theſe parts. The one the linen,—the other that of the woolen. We have fairly adjuſted the balance, and thrown our reaſons in favours of each of theſe branches of trade, into oppoſite ſcales: thoſe in favours of the woolen manufacture, ſoon infinitely preponderated. It behoves us to give ſome account of theſe reaſons.

In judging of the matter before us, one of our reaſons for preferring the woolen manufacture, is, that the Highlands itſelf affords great quantities of the raw material of that manufacture, the conſumption of which, at home, would

would be a great attainment to the Country. Although this circumſtance was very favourable, we do not know, (conſidering the quick market there is at preſent for wool,) if it would have determined us, had we not been alſo of opinion, that of the two manufactures mentioned, the woolen was the one of which an experiment could be made in the Highlands, at the leaſt expence; in aid of which opinion, the circumſtance of the wool's being ready at hand in the Highlands comes in.

For making a fair experiment of the trade we have been recommending, it is our opinion, that the Society ſhould, (if it does not chooſe to make the trial at its own expence,) ſtrain every nerve to obtain public aid, to enable it to build

build a ſmall village upon a favourable ſpot in the inland parts of ſome of the Highland counties. Some of the inland parts of Argyleſhire are well adapted for ſuch a village; but as that county has already a deal of trade, and is in a fair way of having more, probably it would be as well to favour ſome place of leſs trade, and farther north, with the village; perhaps ſome part in the heights of Perth, Roſs, or Inverneſs-ſhires. The local advantages principally to be ſecured, in ſetting down ſuch a village, are ſo obvious, that it is almoſt waſting time to mention them. The leading objects are, the choice of a place in the neighbourhood of a ſheep country, in a ſpot capable of improvement, and from whence a road could be cheapeſt made,

to

to communicate with the neareſt ſea-port.

We ſhall be extremely cautious in adviſing the Society to launch out large ſums of money upon ſpeculation. We are ſenſible that the moſt laudable intentions, for the wiſeſt purpoſes, and proceeding upon the beſt grounded expectations, may, and ſometimes have been defeated through miſmanagements, or the intervention of wayward circumſtances, ariſing out of the concatenated train of events beyond the eye of human foreſight. The beſt way, in our opinion, in caſes of the nature now before us, is not to proceed altogether upon mere hypotheſis; but where it is in our power, (as in this caſe it certainly is,) to poſſeſs ourſelves of ſome argument

ment derived from fact, as a reſting-place in our ſpeculative journey: Having got hold of ſuch a place, we can there breathe a little, and not only look to what is before us, but alſo to what is behind, and make choice of advancing or retreating as is moſt convenient.

Now, in this village, ſo to be built by way of experiment, we would propoſe, *1ſt*, To erect ſmall houſes for the reception of poor families; the number of theſe not to exceed fifty, and the expence of each houſe, not to exceed 25l. *2dly*, A better kind of houſes, with ſmall ſhops facing the ſtreet, not exceeding the value of 50l. each; the number of theſe we would propoſe ſhould be fix. *3dly*, Buildings, in which may be carried on the kind of woolen manufacture

manufacture hereafter to be mentioned, to the extent in value of 350 l.; and a houſe and offices for the perſon who ſhall carry on ſuch manufacture, of the value of 200 l. 4*thly*, A houſe for a dyer, with a dye-houſe adjoining, together of the value of 80 l. 5*thly*, A place of worſhip, with a ſmall public clock therein; together of the value of 200 l. 6*thly*, A public houſe of the value of 150 l. 7*thly*, A wauk-mill, with a houſe adjoining for the waulker, together of the value of 60 l. 8*thly*, A public Well, of the value of 50 l. 9*thly*, A ſchool-houſe, with accommodations for the ſchool-maſter, of the value of 70 l. 10*thly*, A houſe for the preacher, of the value of 60 l. And, 11*thly*, and *laſtly*, a ſtore-houſe of the value of 150 l. The expence of incloſing with a dry-ſtone dyke

dyke the ſmall gardens of the ſettlers we eſtimate at 50 l; and for incloſing thoſe of the other ſettlers we reckon 20 l. will be neceſſary, making together 70 l. We reckon 200 l. would be ſufficient to defray the expence of ſuperintending the building of the village, and 500 l. may be ſtated as the purchaſe-money of a piece of muir-ground, for the ſite of the village, and for a ſmall territory about it, upon which it might, if needful, be extended: and we ſtate 460 l. for carrying on any other building which may be found neceſſary, and for incidents and contingencies; making the whole out-lay for the village the ſum of 4150 l.

Having given this abſtract of our ſcheme of building the village, it is

ferred as the *firſt* upon which the experiment ſhould be tried, whether *any manufacture at all* in theſe parts would anſwer. In moſt of the manufactures of this country, coals are neceſſary; but as theſe (even although found in the Highlands) could not be obtained but at a very great expence, we ſhould, for the reaſons above mentioned, think it very unadviſeable, to make the experiment in queſtion upon any manufacture in which the uſe of that fuel was abſolutely neceſſary. The ſtockings, we would propoſe ſhould not be manufactured in the loom, but knitted upon wires, as is practiſed in the country of Aberdeen-ſhire: this method is not only beſt ſuited to the Highlands, as tending to anſwer one of the chief purpoſes of the Society viz. the employing the people;

ple; but the ſtockings ſo manufactured, though not ſo ſhewy, are yet more ſubſtantial than loom ſtockings, and have accordingly preference in Holland, which is the beſt market for ſtockings we know. At ſame time, if circumſtances juſtify it, the loom ſtocking-weaving might be tried.

The next thing for our conſideration, is, to fix upon that plan of introducing this manufacture into the interior Highlands, which ſhall be leaſt liable to abuſe or diſappointment. We own this is not ſo eaſy to judge of: for, on the one hand, we find that to attempt it upon cheap terms would only produce the evils we dread; on the other hand, we find the encouragements neceſſary to do it to purpoſe will be a

heavy expence. We have, however, no alternative, as it is clear that that method which ſhall be found to bring the Society's intentions beſt about, though moſt expenſive at firſt, will alſo be found in the end to be the cheapeſt, and to it, therefore, we give the preference. The Society's purpoſes can never be brought about by taking the manufacture into its own hand, and appointing people to ſuperintend and conduct it. Needy or deſperate men might offer themſelves upon eaſy terms; but experience ſhews, that the execution of public purpoſes, truſted into the hands of ſuch people, has not produced any good; unleſs adminiſtering to the neceſſities of the parties ſo employed can be called ſo. If therefore the Society ſhall ever think of adopting the meaſures we are recommend-

mending, if they are to be well ſerved, it muſt be by perſons, not only of character and probity, but of known property.

The encouragements neceſſary, on the one hand, to procure the ſervices of a perſon or perſons of this deſcription, and the engagements he or they ought to come under in return for theſe encouragements, on the other hand, is what we ſhall now ſtate.

To make the Society's intentions in this reſpect public, the beſt way would be, to advertiſe in the newſpapers the offers of the Society, which, in our humble opinion, ought to be as follows, viz. That to any perſon or perſons, individuals or companies, converſant in the woollen

woollen manufacture, who ſhall ſatisfy the Society, that he or they are poſſeſſed of a capital of at leaſt 1500 l. and who ſhall be willing to ſet up the ſaid buſineſs in ſaid village, and to come under the conditions hereafter to be mentioned, the Society will procure the following encouragements to be given: *Firſt*, That there ſhall be paid to ſuch perſons, upon the amount of the capital employed by him or them, each and every year, a clear premium of 15 *per cent. per annum.* 2*dly*, That the Society, for the farther encouragement of ſuch perſon or perſons, will procure accommodations to be built for carrying on the ſaid buſineſs, and accommodations alſo for the family of ſuch perſon or perſons, to the extent, together, of at leaſt 550 l.; ſuch buildings to be exe-

cuted

cuted according to the plan of the ſaid perſon or perſons, but under the inſpection of the Society or its agent. 3*dly*, That the ſaid perſon or perſons, ſhall, beſides theſe encouragements, be entitled to the excluſive privilege of carrying on the ſaid buſineſs in the ſaid village, for the term of fourteen years, during all which time he ſhall be free of rent for the ſaid buildings, and be entitled to the ſaid 15 *per cent.* and alſo the other encouragements herein after mentioned. 4*thly*, That the Society ſhall engage itſelf to have always upon hand in the ſaid village, a ſufficient quantity of oat or bear-meal, ready to be ſold to the people employed in the ſaid manufacture by ſuch perſon or perſons, at the average price which it ſhall appear from the modes preſcribed by law,

law, for fixing the prices which regulate the importation and exportation of victual, ſuch meal ſhall bear at the time, in the county where the ſaid village ſhall be ſituated. 5*thly*, The Society ſhould offer, for facilitating the trade of ſuch perſon or perſons, to procure, that good and paſſable roads ſhall be made between ſuch village, and the ſea-port town neareſt thereto. 6*thly*, The Society ſhould offer to procure, that ſuch perſon or perſons ſhall be accommodated during the currency of the ſaid fourteen years, with a quantity of land rent-free in the near vicinity of ſuch village, ſufficient for the maintenance of three horſes and two cows; two of the former of which, with a proper waggon, the Society ſhould engage to procure to ſuch perſon

perſon or perſons *gratis*. For the farther encouragement of ſuch perſon or perſons, the Society ſhould engage itſelf, that, at the expiry of the ſaid fourteen years, it ſhould be optional to the ſaid perſon to continue the bargain with the Society for ſeven years more, with this deduction of circumſtances in favours of the latter, that at the expiry of the ſaid firſt term of years, and during the currency of the ſaid ſeven years, the ſaid perſon or perſons ſhould not be entitled to the excluſive privilege of carrying on the ſaid manufacture in the ſaid village, nor to any more than 10 *per cent. per annum* upon the ſum employed by him or them in each year during the ſaid ſeven years. And *laſtly*, For the ſtill farther encouragement of ſuch perſon or perſons,

it

it ſhould be optional to him or them, to continue the bargain with the Society for ſtill ſeven years more, without any excluſive privilege in favours of the former, and upon a premium of only 5 *per cent. per annum*, upon the ſum he or they ſhall ſo employ, ſubject to a deduction in name of rent, of 5 *per cent.* of the ſum the buildings and land occupied by ſuch perſon or perſons, ſhall have coſt the Society or the public. For the additional encouragement of ſuch perſon or perſons, the Society ſhould engage itſelf, that with every apprentice the ſaid perſon or perſons ſhall take to teach the weaving, dyeing, waulking, or wool-combing, for ſeven years, the Society will procure to be paid to ſuch perſon or perſons the ſum of 50 l. in name of apprentice-fee, upon the maſ-

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ter, becoming bound to maintain and clothe, in a ſuitable manner, ſuch apprentice during the whole time of his ſaid ſervice ; and the Society ſhould farther engage itſelf to build for the accommodation, of the trade of ſuch perſon or perſons, a dye-houſe, a comb-ſhop, and a waulk-mill, together with free houſes and gardens, to each of the perſons who ſhall occupy the ſaid works ; and to accommodate, alſo in like manner, the perſons hereafter to be mentioned, which the ſaid perſon or perſons ſhall by his or their bargain be obliged to bring into the ſaid village for teaching the country people. The Society ſhould at the ſame time offer, in like public manner, to ſuch perſons as are willing to ſettle in the ſaid village, and to furniſh out of

their reſpective familes five people able to work at the ſaid manufacture, a houſe and garden, free of rent for ſeven years, and to ſupply ſuch families at all times with meal, at the prices already mentioned. To perſons willing to carry on any uſeful craft, or a retail trade in the village, the Society ſhould offer one of the 50 l. houſes and a garden, rent-free for three years.

In return for theſe encouragements, the Society ſhould, in the *firſt* place, take ſuch contracter or contracters bound by himſelf or themſelves, and two ſufficient ſecurites, in a ſum equal to double his or their capital, that he or they ſhall implement everycondition he or they may enter into with the Society or the public.

Next,

Next, the ſaid perſon or perſons ſhould be taken bound to bring into the ſaid village, and keep there at all times, during the currency of his or their ſaid bargain, ten young women from Aberdeen-ſhire, and as many weavers of ſerge from Stirling, the former for the purpoſe of teaching the ſpinning of woolen yarn, and knitting of ſtockings; and the latter, for teaching apprentices the ſerge-weaving: And alſo, to bring into the ſaid village, and keep there as aforeſaid, four wool-combers, one dyer, and one waulker, for inſtructing apprentices. Next, the ſaid perſon or perſons ſhould be taken bound, to keep employed, during the currency of his or their ſaid bargain, within the manufacturing-houſe, the following number of perſons in each

of the branches of the manufacture, viz. Eleven ſerge-weavers, thirty ſpinners of wool, and as many knitters of ſtockings, including apprentices and women-learners: In the comb-ſhop, five wool-combers, including an apprentice: In the dye-houſe, three dyers, including apprentices; and at the waulk-mill, two waulkers, including an apprentice. And moreover, ſuch perſon or perſons ſhould be obliged to engage himſelf or themſelves, to employ at leaſt fifty of the country people without doors, in ſpinning wool, or knitting ſtockings, if as many will accept of employment. At ſame time, there ſhould be no reſtraint upon ſuch perſon or perſons, to employ as many more as he or they ſhall think proper. Such perſon or perſons

perſons ſhould be farther taken bound, to take at leaſt one apprentice each year, during the ſaid fourteen years, to the weaving buſineſs; one each third year to the wool-combing; two every fifth year to the dyeing buſineſs; and one every ſeventh year to the waulking: The ſaid apprentices to be natives of the Highlands.

Theſe are the outlines of what appears to us proper to be done, for making trial of introducing the woollen manufacture into the interior Highlands. We do not recollect any farther regulations of conſequence, which we imagine would be neceſſary, except the appointment of ſome proper perſon at ſaid village, with a ſuitable allowance, in

quality of agent for the public, to be a check upon the manufacturer, and to ſell the meal to the villagers out of the public ſtore-houſe. This perſon ought to be in the commiſſion of the peace, to enable him to decide any little differences which may ariſe in the village. We might have mentioned ſundry leſſer regulations, which may be neceſſary, but they would have only ſwelled our paper, already perhaps long enough. We have, as we imagine, pointed out the way to avoid the greateſt difficulties. When ſuch a village is eſtabliſhed for a year or two, it will be eaſy, by throwing out little baits, to allure ſmall country dealers and others, to come and ſettle in it; to obtain a ſhare of the money which the manufacture will circulate,

will

will of itſelf be a ſufficient inducement to ſome.

But the greateſt obſtacle to our ſcheme yet remains. We have been all along ſpeaking of introducing the manufacture in queſtion into the Highlands, without ſaying who ſhall be at the expence of doing ſo. In treating of the Fiſheries, we took occaſion to remark, that a buſineſs of the nature before us was in our opinion properly the province of the State. We reflect, with almoſt indignation, upon the waſte of money (no leſs than 27,000 l. in nine years) which took place in conſequence of the plan for carrying on a manufacture in the Highlands in the laſt reign: What amazing things might have been done with that money by due

ma-

management? but that is not now a matter for conſideration: The point is, to endeavour to find out means whereby money could be raiſed to make the experiment we are ſpeaking of: We do not think it could be made upon a ſmaller ſcale than that we have propoſed; ſome will perhaps think the ſcale propoſed too ſmall; but if the ſcheme is found not to anſwer, enough of money will be loſt, and if it ſucceeds, it is eaſy to enlarge the undertaking.

Comparatively ſmall as the ſum needed is, yet we doubt if miniſters will go into the meaſure of granting it: It would interfere with the plan of oeconomy which they, it appears, would wiſh to lay down to themſelves: therefore,

fore, in the worſt event, we do not think it would be very difficult to raiſe the ſum wanted, by private contribution.

In conſidering this, there is no plan which it appears to us would anſwer ſo well, as for the gentlemen in Scotland, who have landed property in the Highlands, to aſſeſs themſelves voluntarily in a ſmall pondage upon the real rent of their reſpective eſtates, which would raiſe all that would be needed, without falling very heavy upon any individual. We ſuppoſe a fund rather under 10,000 l. would anſwer for building the village, paying the premium to the manufacturer, the ſalaries to the miniſter, ſchoolmaſter, and ſuperintendant, making the road, and ſtoring meal for the

the villagers. There is no doubt, that *no immediate profit* would ariſe to any individual contributer to this plan, (the proprietor or proprietors of the land in the neighbourhood of the village excepted,) but rather loſs; at leaſt, for a long time, no money would come in; though, if the village throve, there is no doubt but in time the ſubſcribers or their heirs would be indemnified. But the conſideration, that the object aimed at is not ſo much *immediate* profit, as the diffuſing of general good, (in which even individual contributors may eventually ſhare) will, in the opinion of every well-wiſher of his country, more than compenſate any *temporary* loſs ſuſtained by him in the proſecution of the plan propoſed.

After

After all, aid from Government ſhould not be deſpaired of. The influence of the Highland Society is great, and its exertions no leſs ſo: perhaps by ſtrenuous efforts, the ſum mentioned, and probably more, might be obtained for the purpoſe in hand: That this may be the caſe, we moſt devoutly wiſh.

We have now gone over a good deal of ground, and probably from our manner, as well as our matter, have tired our reader. All we can ſay is that we meant

meant well, aud ſhall be extremely happy if any thing we have ſaid will be found uſeful. The truth we have made our ſtandard; and in our opinions, as well as in our details have had regard to that alone. We ſhall conclude with briefly recapitulating our chief topics.

RECAPI-

RECAPITULATION

OF

THE PRINCIPAL TOPICS

CONTAINED IN THE

FOREGOING OBSERVATIONS.

First, we have argued, That there is already as much encouragement given to the Herring Fiſhery, as, in the preſent confined ſale of that fiſh, is conſiſtent with the ſafety of the trade: That before much farther encouragement be given, new markets muſt be found out, or thoſe already known ſecured to us by the ſuperiority of our fiſh: That our herrings, being at preſent inferior to our great rivals the Dutch,—therefore, the *firſt*, and almoſt

only encouragement to be given the Fiſhery for them, is, to bring over Dutch curers into this country, to teach our people their method. This is our opinion as to the Herring-Fiſhery.

WITH regard to the improvement of the inland parts of the Highlands, we think it very practicable, and that it is an object well worthy of public attention: That the introduction of ſome uſeful manufacture would be the beſt means of attaining that deſirable purpoſe; and that the woollen manufacture is the one beſt adapted to the inland parts of the Highlands, in the preſent ſtate of that country.

We have in the foregoing paper ſaid little about the Fiſhery for cod, ling, and

and other gray-fiſh: The people of Scotland can cure theſe kinds of fiſh, at leaſt equally well with any foreigners; but there are ſuch prodigious quantities caught by the Dutch, Danes, Swedes &c. that the markets are generally glutted; and beſides, theſe nations underſell us; which they are enabled to do, from the cheap way in which they conduct every thing about the Fiſhery. There is, however, great room yet to proſecute the Gray Fiſhery to a conſiderable extent; for we have a very good market for theſe fiſh in the Britiſh capital: The encouragements given, through the hands of the truſtees for Fiſheries and manufactures in Scotland, to that trade, we think are very liberal, as well as the bounty paid by Government upon the exportation of ſuch fiſh;

and both ought to ſtimulate adventurers in that way.

CONCLUSION.

WE take leave of the whole ſubject, by candidly confeſſing, that the *Fiſhery itſelf*, unconnected with the circumſtances of its being a nurſery for ſeamen, is by no means ſo conſiderable an object as has been imagined. A great deal has been ſaid about our excellent ſituation for fiſhing; and there is no body can doubt but our ſhores are frequented by all kinds of fiſh. The enthuſiaſts upon this ſubject have however forgot, that a great many countries in Europe, eſpecially upon the coaſts of the Baltic, are nearly equally well ſituated for fiſhing. Theſe people have argued

argued in favours of unlimitedly puſhing the Fiſhery, in ſame manner as if there were not a fiſh to be found upon any of the coaſts of Europe, except thoſe of GreatBritain. But the egregious folly of ſuch advice is apparent, when it is well known, that the coaſts of great part of Europe are as well frequented by fiſh as ours, and that the natives there can meet us at market, ſome of them with better cured, and all of them with cheaper fiſh than ours, to the almoſt total excluſion of us from any ſhare of the trade ——The truth ſeems to be, that the matter has not been ſo well digeſted or underſtood as was neceſſary, before it was publicly embarked in: This was owing to too much confidence having been put in the plauſible averments, contained in certain writings with which the

public were entertained, ſome time before the buſineſs of the Fiſheries was taken up by Parliament: who theſe writings came from, every one knows, as well as how much the ſplendid concluſions therein drawn, and the mighty things there promiſed, have, by experience, ſince that time been found to fall ſhort.

If therefore thoſe virtuous individuals, who have, from the beſt of motives, ſtept forward in this buſineſs, wiſh to avoid miſtake and diſappointment, they will read every line of thoſe romantic ſcribblers, who have propoſed *numbers of Fiſhing Towns*, (nay, ſome of them, FISHING CITIES!) with caution; and, without regarding *their* cloſet-reveries, *judge for themſelves*, and beſtow that pains and expence upon the Fiſhery which it ſhall have *a good claim to*, and no more.

WE

We ſhould be wanting to the intention which we have profeſſed, of giving our ſincere and undiſguiſed opinion upon the matters in hand, if we ſhould finally conclude theſe our obſervations, without recalling to the attention of the Joint-ſtock Company, what we have ſaid concerning the neceſſity, which, in our opinion, there is, for that Society endeavouring to find out ſome other employment beſides fiſhing, for the people who may ſettle at their new villages upon the Weſt coaſt. Without this point is attended to, what has been ſo nobly and generouſly done by them for that country will be loſt: A few years of ill ſucceſs in the fiſhing would deſolate theſe villages. This evil ſtrikes at the very root of the Company's good purpoſes: Indeed, for our part, we do not ſee how the poor people, who may

come

come to reſide in theſe villages, and who have no other means of ſubſiſtence but by the Fiſhery, can remain there even during the yearly intervals of the fiſhing ſeaſons: We took the liberty, in a former part of theſe ſheets, to propoſe a remedy for this inconveniency: It was, that the Company ſhould endeavour to eſtabliſh ſome kind of manufacture in thoſe villages: It has been an objection, (and we think it a good one) that upon the Weſt coaſt, the fiſher and the farmer are often one and the ſame perſon, by which means juſtice is not done to either of the profeſſions: But no objection of that ſort can be made againſt the plan of ſetting up a manufacture in each of the new villages; becauſe, if it is a woollen one, (as we formerly propoſed it ſhould be) the work at *it* would fall to the ſhare of the women of the fami-

ly,

ly, and not to the men. By means of the money ſo earned by the women, and the occaſional fiſhing and induſtry of the men, the families of the ſettlers would be ſubſiſted during the intervals of the herring-ſeaſon,—be enabled to live in comfort,—and at laſt become attached to the village, as a place where they would be always ſure of a living. In ſhort, if the Joint-ſtock Company are to look for ſucceſs in their laudable endeavours, it is our moſt ſincere opinion, that they muſt have a very tender care of their new eſtabliſhments at their outſet: All will depend on this. To what purpoſe will it tend, if the Company ſhould lay out ever ſo much money, or occupy ever ſo large an extent of ground, in the erection of buildings? To be ſure, a town will be ſoon produced in that way; but a town, without inhabi-

tants,

tants, will make but a woeful appearance, and do little good to its neighbourhood, or to the country at large. But if the Company ſhall proceed upon rational principles, and extend its foſtering hand to its new eſtabliſhments; that is to ſay, take ſuch ſteps, and make ſuch proviſions, as that no poor man, who ſhall come to reſide in theſe villages, will ever be obliged to leave them for want of employment and ſubſiſtence, the Company will ſoon ſee theſe eſtabliſhments ſtand upon their own legs, even totally independent of the Fiſhery. In proportion as the true intereſt of the new villages is attended to at their commencement, in proportion will they the ſooner relieve the Company of the taſk of providing for them: A collected ſociety is what is wanted upon the Weſt coaſt above all things.

To

To effect this purpoſe, the Company have taken the firſt natural ſtep, *viz.* The laying out and encouraging the building of a town. But ſurely it requires little penetration, to ſee that this is only doing the one half of the buſineſs; and it requires as little foreſight to pronounce, that if the other part (*viz.* Finding employment for the people who may come to reſide in the towns) does not ſhortly accompany the firſt, what is already done will be loſt. But if meaſures are taken to hold out advantages to poor people to ſettle at theſe villages, by aſſuring them of conſtant employment, the conſequence will be, that theſe ſettlements will ſoon be populous enough.—A Society once collected, will tend to draw more people there to ſupply its wants: mutual wants, and mutual dependencies, will unite, mix,

mix, and increaſe this ſociety: In a ſhort time, individuals will ſtep in, to ſhare with the Company the benefit of the people's labour, by eſtabliſhing manufactories upon their own account; and at laſt, the Company, and the people of this country, may, even in our own times, have the inexpreſſible ſatisfaction of ſeeing theſe eſtabliſhments ſtanding upon their own bottom, the Company relieved of their charge, and their aim of civilizing, ſettling, and improving the Weſt Highland coaſt, fairly attained, to the comfort and bleſſing of thouſands, and to the everlaſting honour of thoſe whoſe patriotiſm and virtue firſt led them to undertake the glorious taſk of exciting their fellow-ſubjects, and fellow-men, to activity, and relieving them from the pre ure of want.

FINIS.